DULCIMER PLAYERS news

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The Journal for Hammered and Fretted Dulcimer Enthusiasts

Vol. 32, No. 2 ★ May 2006 – July 2006

$6.00

Warren A. May

In this issue...

- ★ 8th Yangqin Congress in Beijing
- ★ 1972 Dulcimer Trip: Part 2
- ★ Remarkable Tintype Photograph
- ★ Many Spring and Summer Events

Meet...

- ★ Lorraine Hammond
- ★ Warren A. May

Plus

Music, Reviews and more . . .

Our 32nd year!

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Dulcimer Players News

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May 2006–July 2006

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Technical Dulcimer • **Sam Rizzetta**

Mountain Dulcimer History • **Ralph Lee Smith**

Hammered Dulcimer History • **Paul Gifford**

What's New/Musical Reviews
Neal Walters

The Art of Performing • **Steve Schneider**

Youth Dulcimer • **Johnny Ray**

■

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Founded in 1975 by Phillip Mason

The *Dulcimer Players News* is published four times each year. Issues are mailed (via 3rd class) to subscribers in mid-January, mid-April, mid-July and mid-October. Subscriptions in the United States are $24 per year, $45 for two years. Canada: $26 per year (Visa, MasterCard, US banks or international money orders only). Other countries (surface mail): $26 (US funds, US banks or international money orders only). Recent back issues are usually available.

Dear Readers

The months of October 2005 through February 2006 have been a whirlwind of recording, performing and DPN work. Last evening, March 1st, as I faced a DPN deadline of March 2nd, I began to panic. Perhaps I shouldn't travel so much; desk work calls me. Those of you who write for the DPN surely know that I'm hard to catch sometimes! It was nearing 7 p.m. The night prayer, Compline, happens at the Trappist monastery "next door" to my home at 7:30 p.m. Something convinced me to go to Compline and take a bit of time away from my work.

As I walked up the steps to the chapel, I noticed the sliver of the moon across fields and pastures and heard the mooing of a cow in the distance. I stopped and began to replay February's southern trip in my mind. Yes, that meant long days of work to catch up on the spring DPN when I returned. I could not have even gone if my assistant, Clare Ellis, weren't here doing her incredible work. But I had learned so much from so many people during my journey. I realized that they shared their lives and their music with me, and I came home enriched.

Monastery retreatants quietly passed by me as I stood on the chapel steps, remembering Nathan, a soldier injured in Iraq whom I met at a Veteran's Hospital in Georgia. My promo flyer for the concert mentioned accomplishments—as we must mention when we're out in the public—but Nathan was more impressed that I live in Virginia, perhaps 65 miles from his West Virginia home. We talked about music, and I showed him and others the workings of the dulcimer. I promised Nathan that I'd wave in the direction of his home when I got near to mine, telling his family and friends that he'd be home soon. I did.

I thought about the women I met in Florida, in Titusville and Okeechobee for example, who are tirelessly bringing the mountain dulcimer to the attention of other snow birds and teaching them. They all, in turn, share the instrument within and beyond their communities.

Ruth Harnden, a long-time dulcimer friend, popped into my mind. Since my family heritage is Bostonian, I love to hear Ruth talk without "R's filling her speech! More importantly, Ruth, who now lives near Mt. Dora, Florida, continues her work of spreading dulcimer and autoharp via a new February festival. I smiled, as a distant cow echoed my amusement, I'm sure, at the memory of the sign in front of Ruth's festival location. No one noticed, until the last minute that the sign read, Dulcimer and Autoharp Festival. That brought us all (Ruth included) to a lot of music-inspired chuckles.

So many dulcimer players, along with autoharp players, harpists and others, are now working within programs of music for healing and transition. One of them, Cheryl Belanger, asked me to play music at the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa during my trip. Esther, a woman coming in for treatment after surgery for a brain tumor, stopped as her husband pushed her wheelchair through the lobby. For a few moments she and I were the only ones in the universe (if that makes sense). She listened to my songs and I looked at her incredible face filled with knowledge and hope. I'll never forget her.

The trip continued on to Pensacola and into southern Alabama. Sheryl Bragwell, part of Pensacola's wonderful trio Sweet Prospect, took a week off work so she could drive home with me. During close to 1,000 miles we talked Celtic music and dulcimers and hits of the 1960's (I have satellite radio) and special areas of Florida and Virginia—and places in between. Those of you who aren't as accustomed to wearing coats/hats/gloves in February as do those of us in northern Virginia—and farther north—will probably understand why Sheryl forgot her coat in Charlotte, North Carolina. I had extras.

So now I'm home and facing a big deadline. It's a promise to DPN readers that issues won't be late, and the issue that goes in the mail in mid-April will be completed today, March 2nd, for Jeff Hess, the graphic artist. But last night the monastery bell called me from my musings on the chapel steps; Compline was five minutes away from beginning. I went inside, saw Christian (a friend who lives and works at the monastery), sat beside him, and spent perhaps twenty minutes greeting the peaceful ending of a good day spent with DPN readers—and the memories of an inspiring February journey.

Maddie MacNeil

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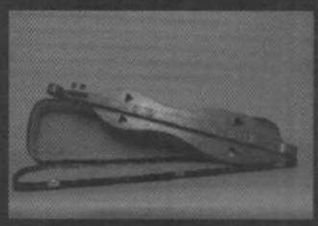

2006 Summer Dulcimer Workshops

Mountain Dulcimer Workshops, July 26 - 29
With Maureen Sellers, Jerry Rockwell and Judy Klinkhammer

Hammered Dulcimer Workshops, July 31 - August 3
With David Moran, Victoria Johnson and Steve Eulberg

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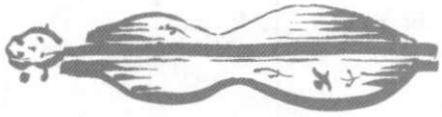
Letters To Us

Dear DPN

My son John Anderson was the little brother (Big Brother/Sisters of Houston) of Larry & Sylvia Barringer from 1980 until Larry passed away. I've just had a great visit with Sylvia and I'm trying to locate one of Larry's dulcimers to have as a memento. If anyone has one that they are willing to sell, please contact me: terriev@wcnet.net, 877-810-1888. Thank you.

Terrie Vacek
East Bernard, Texas



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816-331-5728 e-mail: jam@kcnet.com

Musical Reviews

Neal Walters

Carolyn Cruso is equally at home on hammered dulcimer, flute and guitar. She is also a gifted tunesmith. **Boundless** is her third solo release and is a sparkling collection of original material (with the exception of one imaginative interpretation of the theme associated with the venerable Mr. Joe Clark) played flawlessly on the solo hammered dulcimer. The tunes were written over a period of some fifteen years or so in places as disparate as Amsterdam and Orcas Island. Carolyn's leanings are definitely Celtic, but her playing would be outstanding in any genre. Her original material is complex musically and ranges from the soft and gentle to compelling and urgent intensity. The overall effect is paradoxically both calm and soothing, which I attribute to the grace and skill of her playing. This is a recording to savor and will take more than one listening to fully appreciate. Selections include The Valley, Chatter Creek, The Magic Shirt, Squall, and Carolyn's Welcome.

The Celtibillies hail from Southwest Virginia and recently celebrated their 10th year together. As might be expected, their Appalachian roots run deep and their music explores the linkage between the music of the mountains and the Celtic music from which much of that music has sprung. It is worth mentioning that the Celtibillies were selected to represent the Appalachia musical tradition at the Smithsonian's Heritage and Harmony exhibition in 2003. The band is Becky Barlow on hammered dulcimer, keyboard, bodhran and vocals; Jack Hinshelwood on fiddle, guitar and vocals; Tim Saul on banjo, bouzouki, guitar, fiddle and vocals; and Jeff Hofmann on acoustic bass. **The Shoemaker's Child** extends their musical reach to include Scandinavian and Canadian sources. Their music is thoroughly delightful whether they're belting out a set of jigs and reels, a rollicking string band tune, an old blues song or a contemplative ballad. Becky's

hammered dulcimer is an important part of their sound, though not always in a lead role. She offers a great example of how to integrate the dulcimer into a string band setting. The CD's liner notes have been carefully and meticulously researched. Their music deserves to be in your collection! Selections include Munster Buttermilk/Fiddler of Dooney/Sliagbh Russell, Roddy McCorley, Where the Sun Don't Never Go Down, and Abe's Reteat/ Big Lick.

Appalachian Mandolin & Dulcimer has dulcimer player David Schnaufer joining mandolin player Butch Baldissari in a wonderful collection of 14 traditional fiddle tunes designed to "showcase the traditional music of the Appalachian mountains." The music is performed on a variety of mandolins and dulcimers with no overdubbing. David describes the collaboration as "a musical conversation performed on vintage and contemporary instruments in settings to showcase the rare archaic harmonies of these joyful, lonesome and eternal themes." The album is definitely a showcase for these master musicians. David's playing is always a treat to hear as he plays both standard and baritone dulcimers in addition to a couple of numbers each on Galax dulcimer and his trademark Tennessee Music Box. Butch's mandolin playing may not be as familiar to readers of this magazine, but I've been a fan of his tasteful playing for years. They make tuneful magic together. Selections include Ground Hog, June Apple, Muddy Roads, Tater Patch and Sandy River Belle.

Katie Waldren and Candace Kreitlow have been together for 10 years now as the duo Heartwood. They play a number of instruments, including Celtic harp, lap and hammered dulcimer, guitar, and fiddle. They also sing like angels. Their repertoire combines Celtic and Appalachian influences and includes both contemporary and traditional American and British Isles folk music, as well as an abundance of original material. **Babes in the Wood** is a 2-CD set and is now the fourth Heartwood release. Katie focuses on fiddle, vocals and lap and hammered dulcimer while Candace plays Celtic harp, guitar, and flute in addition to their vocals. Ian Cunningham adds percussion. This is a gorgeous package, full of sprightly beauty and grace. The arrangements are lovingly crafted, lush and varied. All of the instruments are played with skill and sensitivity, but it is the sound of the dulcimer and harp in combination that makes this recording so special to my ears. The album's packaging and engineering are extremely well done as well. There are nearly 90 minutes of altogether exceptional music on the two CDs. Selections include Canned Goods, The Heartland, Whippoorwill, I Like It Slow, Morning Star, Hallowed Ground and Pale Eyed Son.

Reviews

Boundless • Carolyn Cruso, PO Box 456, Orcas, WA 98280, 360-376-5290, carolyncruso@rockisland.com, carolyn cruso.com (CD)

The Shoemaker's Child • Celtibillies, Jack Hinshelwood, 3708 Old Town Road, Shawsville, VA 24162, hinshel@verizon .net, celtibillies.com (CD)

Appalachian Mandolin & Dulcimer • Butch Baldassari and David Schnaufer, SoundArt Recordings, 125 43rd Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37209, 877-292-0324, soundartrecordings.com (CD)

Babes in the Wood • Heartwood, c/o Katie LaRaye Waldren, P.O. Box 24, Mazomanie, WI 53560, 608-795-2931, ktbmoms@chorus.net, katiewaldren .com, heartwoodproductions.com (2-CD Set)

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NETWORKING

Closing dates for the August–October 2006 DPN
(To be mailed to subscribers in mid-July)

Information for News & Notes, Letters, Events, etc: May 10th

Unclassified Ads: May 10th

Display Ads: May 10th (space reservation), May 20th (camera-ready copy)

Ad Prices

Unclassified Ads:

45¢ per word. 4 issues paid in advance without copy changes: 20% discount.

Display Ads:

1/12 page $35 • 1/6 page $70

1/4 page $105 • 1/3 page $140

1/2 page $200 • Full page $400

Inside back cover $450

Outside back cover (½ page) $290

Contact us concerning multiple insertion discounts. Advertisers: Please be sure to mention which kind of dulcimer is featured on recordings.

For inquiries concerning interviews and articles, contact us for details and a style sheet. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome. For returns of manuscripts, photos, or artwork, please enclose a stamped envelope; otherwise DPN is not responsible for their eventual fate. The DPN reserves the right to edit all manuscripts for length and clarity. The opinions expressed therein are not necessarily those of the Dulcimer Players News.

Technical Dulcimer Questions
Sam Rizzetta
Rizzetta Music
PO Box 530
Inwood, WV 25428

Recordings and Books for Review
Neal Walters
12228 Hollowell Church Road
Greencastle, PA 17225

News and Notes, Letters, Events, Clubs
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FRIDAY, MAY 19

9am-5pm	Workshops in Roscoe Village
7pm	Dulcimer Clubs Concert

SATURDAY, MAY 20

9 am	Workshops at Lake Park
11:30am-3:30pm	Open, Vocal and Mountain Duet Contests
3:30pm	Workshops at Lake Park
7pm	Concert with David Moran and Neal Hellman
10pm	Open Jam Session

SUNDAY, MAY 21

9:30am	Gospel Sing
10:45am	Mid-Eastern Regional Mountain Dulcimer Championship
12:30pm	Workshops at Lake Park
3pm	Mid-Eastern Regional Hammered Dulcimer Championship

NOTE: Friday workshops are held in Roscoe Village. All performances, contests, and Saturday & Sunday workshops are held at the Pavilion at nearby Lake Park.

For registration information, call 800-877-1830.

THEN, JUNE 17-18, COME BACK FOR THE 27TH ANNUAL

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JUNE 17-18, 2006

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Events

April 28–30 • Door County, WI
Celtic Cafe. Celtic, French and Belgian music instruction, jams, concert. HD, MD, other folk instruments. Info: Theresa Evans, 920-854-7566, ptevans@dcwis.com.

May 5–6 • Denton, TX
Pit Stop Mini Festival. MD workshops, all instrument jams, pot luck, mini concert. Info: Denton Dulci-Doodlers, PO Box 2800, Denton, TX 76202, 940-380-0877, oldrabbit@earthlink.net, dentoncountyhistoricalmuseum.com/dulcidoodlers.html.

May 5–7 • Branson, MO
The DulciSisters Everything Dulcimers Spring Social. All instruments welcome. Info: 417-230-1861 musicmountain dulcimers.com.

May 12–14 • Decatur, AL
Dulci-fest 2006, Point Mallard Campground. MD, HD, other acoustic instruments. Jamming, lessons. Info: Morgan County Dulcimer Association, Janet Henderson, 18 Oak Hill Drive, Somerville Al 35670, 256-353-4239, jhendersonal@msn.com.

May 19–21 • Coshocton, OH
Dulcimer Days at Roscoe Village (MD, HD). Workshops, jamming, exhibits, concert. Info: Roscoe Village Foundation, 381 Hill St., Coshocton, OH 43812. 740-622-9310 or 800-877-1830, roscoevillage.com/dulcimer.htm.

May 19–20 • Florence, AL
Tennessee River Dulcimer Festival. Workshops, jamming, pot luck supper. Info: Gail Logan, 6802 Hwy 207, Anderson, AL 35610, 256-247-0907, glogan4@bellsouth.net.

May 19–20 • Lee's Summit, MO
Jubilee of Acoustic Music. Workshops (HD, MD) and concerts. Info: JAM, jam@kcnet.com, jubileeofacoustic music.org.

EVENTS CALENDAR DEADLINES

November – January issue:
Events from the 2nd weekend of Nov. through the 2nd weekend of Feb.
Deadline: August 5th

February – April issue:
Events from 2nd weekend of Feb. through the 2nd weekend of May
Deadline: November 5th

May – July issue:
Events from 2nd weekend of May through Labor Day weekend
This is our largest yearly calendar
Deadline: February 5th

August – October issue:
Events from the 2nd weekend of Aug. through the 2nd weekend of Nov.
Deadline: May 5th

Continue on next page.

THE MEMPHIS DULCIMER GATHERING & FOLK FESTIVAL 2006

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www.dentoncountyhistoricalmuseum.com/dulcidoodlers.html or email: oldrabbit@earthlink.net

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Princess Harris Christie Burns Molly McCormack Martha Richard

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TIN WHISTLE - Guy George POTTERY & GOURD ART - Anne Zabenco
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MANDOLIN - Spencer Funk FIDDLE - Ken Kolodner & Les Gustafson-Zook
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STAINED GLASS - Gale Sturm WEAVING - Martha Richard
PERFORMANCE SKILLS & SONG WRITING - Pam Temple & Anne McFie

Daytime activities include classes, afternoon mini-workshops including steel drum and gourd banjo building, afternoon jam sessions, and festival general store open all day, every day! Evenings offer two performer concerts, campground jams, Old Time Barn Dance & Cake Walk, evening Open Stage and finale' party/jam! A separate Kids' Camp runs parallel to adult classes for ages 6 - 11.

Classes are held in an air-conditioned facility, all on one floor with close-up parking. Our host hotel is the newly remodeled Days Inn (502-348-9253), and host campgrounds are Holt's (502-348-6717) and White's (502-348-9677).

For more information please write, call or email KMW, P. O. Box 86, Bardstown, KY 40004, 502-348-5237. KYTreeFrog@aol.com or visit our web site for a brochure and detailed information: www.kentuckymusicweek.com.

NOTE: The Kentucky Colonels' Kentucky Music Weekend dates are July 28 & 29, held in Louisville, featuring the Kentucky Mountain & Hammered Dulcimer Championship contests!

May 20 • Shelbyville, IN
Blue River Folk Music Festival. HD, MD. Concerts, workshops, vendors. Info: Shelby Co. Historical Society, 52 W. Broadway, Shelbyville IN 46176, 317-392-4634, grover@shelbynet.net.

May 26–28 • Lisbon, OH
Dulci-More Festival. MD, HD concerts, workshops, mini-concerts, and more. Info: Bill Schilling, 984 Homewood Ave., Salem, OH 44460-3816. 330-332-4420, dulcimore.org.

May 27–28 • Japan
Minori Dulcimer & Autoharp Festival at Ueno Stable. HD, MD, Autoharp. Info: Mr. Masahiko Ueno, Ueno Stable, 692 Noba, Minori, Ibaragi 319-0134 Japan, +81 299-48-4141, amtec@m2.pbc.ne.jp.

May 28–June 3 • Brasstown, NC
Beginning Mountain Dulcimer. Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, One Folk School Road, Brasstown, NC 28902. 800-365-5724. folkschool.org.

May 29–June 4 • Ireland
Causeway Dulcimer Festival, Bushmills, Co. Antrim. Info: Dick Glasgow, causewaymusic.co.uk/cdf06.html.

June 2–3 • Owensboro, KY
Yellowbanks Dulcimer Festival. HD, MD concerts, workshops, crafts, food and vendors. Info: Yellowbanks Dulcimer Society, Thelma Newman, 4113 Mason Woods Lane, Owensboro KY 42303, 270-684-1631, yellowbanks@bellsouth.net.

June 2–4 • Greensburg, PA
Chestnut Ridge Dulcimer Festival. MD, HD workshops and concert. Info: Don and Betty Brinker, 4889 Route 982, Latrobe, PA 15650. 724-539-7983, donbrinker@laurelweb.net, chestnutridgefest.com.

June 3 • Afton, VA
Traditional Dulcimer Day on the Blue Ridge Parkway, milepost 5.8, Afton, Virginia. Demonstrations, performances, jamming. Info: Dinah Ansley, 540-456-6365, dulcimerdinah@cstone.net.

June 4–10 • Mars Hill, NC
Blue Ridge Old-Time Music Week. Includes MD. Classes, concerts, jamming. Info: Mars Hill College, PO Box 6785, Mars Hill NC 28754, 828-689-1646, conferences@mhc.edu, mhc.edu/oldtimemusic.

June 4–10 • Brasstown, NC
Beginning Hammered Dulcimer. Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown NC 28902. 800-365-5724. folkschool.org.

June 10–11 • Morris, IL
Gebhard Woods Dulcimer Festival. MD, HD. Workshops, concerts, jamming, dancing, children's activities. Info: GWDF, PO Box 801, Morris IL 60450, 708-331-6875. gwdf.org.

June 10 • Morgantown, WV
PattyFest. Old-time music festival in honor of Patty Looman. HD, MD, other instruments. Workshops, concerts, vendors. Jeff Fedan, Rt. 1 Box 111, Masontown WV 26542, 304-864-0105, rocks@westco.net.

Continue on next page.

The Eighteenth Annual

Gebhard Woods Dulcimer Festival

June 10th and 11th 2006
Gebhard Woods State Park
Morris, Illinois

Please note change of date

Information: (708) 331-6875
HANDS, PO Box 801, Morris, IL 60450-0801
www.gwdf.org

Performers to include: Mike Anderson, Steve Endsley, Sherri Farley, Diane Ippel with Rob Williams, Neal Peck, Bill Robinson & Friends, Anna Stange and many more!

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Sponsored by Hands of Illinois, Inc., a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting dulcimer music, in association with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the City of Morris. Partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

Upper Potomac Fall Dulcimer Fest

September 8-10, 2006

At the Historic Hilltop House Hotel in Harpers Ferry, WV

Hammered Dulcimer workshops at all levels, mixed instrument classes and more.

Featuring: Karen Ashbrook* Bamboo Breeze * Ken Kolodner * Jody Marshall * Maggie Sansone * Dan Landrum * Others TBA.

.....

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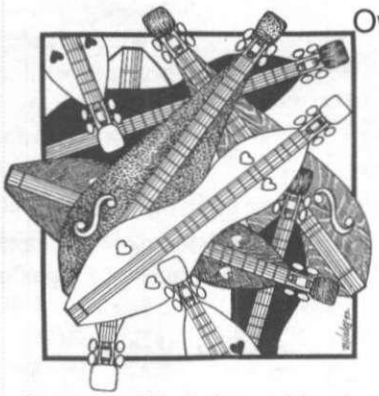

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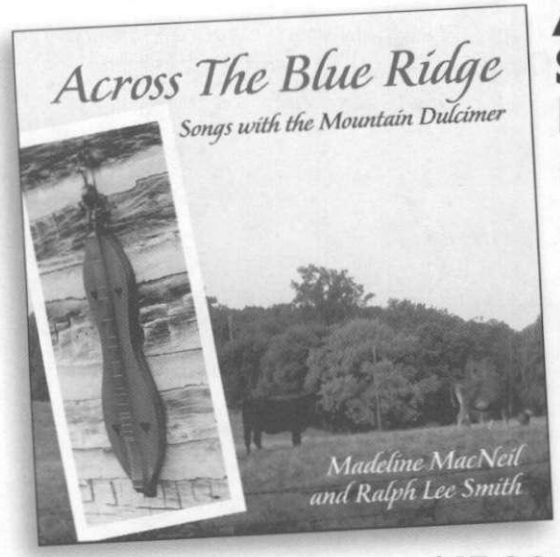

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Madeline MacNeil and Ralph Lee Smith

Madeline MacNeil and Ralph Lee Smith first met at Skyland Lodge on Virginia's Skyline Drive in 1974. Maddie performed folksongs in the Lodge's Mountain Room after dinner for delighted audiences of visitors and tourists, and Ralph had just moved to the Washington area after spending the 60s in the folk music world of Greenwich Village.

On this recording, Maddie and Ralph play dulcimers and sing old-time tunes that they have especially loved and have often performed over the years. Versions of all the songs have been known in the Shenandoah Valley and the Appalachian Mountains for as long as anyone can remember.

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June 12–16 • Dinosaur National Park, CO
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June 14–18 • Kerrville, TX
Hill Country Acoustic Music Camp. HD, MD. Workshops, jamming, concerts. Info: Bob Miller, 888-335-1455, info@hcamp.org, www.hcamp.org.

June 16–18 • Huntingdon, PA
Folk College at Juniata College. HD, MD, other instruments. Workshops (focus on group playing), jam sessions and concerts. Info: 814-643-6220, hcac@adelphia.net, simplegiftsmusic.com/folkcollege.

June 16–18 • Fenton, MI
Friends & Family Campout, sponsored by Silver Strings Dulcimer Society. Jams, workshops, crafts. Info: Marlin & Carol Harmon, 313-537-6290, MalCarol harmon@aol.com.

June 17–18 • Coshocton, OH
Olde Time Music Festival at Historic Roscoe Village. HD, MD workshops, jamming, exhibits, sales, concert. Info: Roscoe Village Foundation, 381 Hill St., Coshocton, OH 43812. 740-622-9310 or 800-877-1830, roscoevillage.com.

June 18–23 • Cullowhee, NC
Mountain Dulcimer Week at Western Carolina University. Courses for all levels. Repertoire classes, concerts, open stage. Info: Continuing Ed & Summer School, WCU Outreach Center, Cullowhee NC 28723, 828-277-7397, wcu.edu/dulcimer.

June 23–25 • Calabasas, CA
Summer Solstice Folk Music, Dance, & Storytelling Festival. MD, HD. Workshops, singing, dancing, storytelling, concerts. Info: California Traditional Music Society, 4401 Trancas Place, Tarzana, CA 91356, 818-817-7756, info@ctmsfolkmusic.org, ctmsfolkmusic.org.

June 23–25 • Altamont, NY
Old Songs Festival of Traditional Music and Dance. Altamont Fairgrounds. Concerts, dancing, workshops, family activities (include HD, MD). Info: Old Songs, Inc., P.O. Box 466, Voorheesville, NY 12186, oldsongs.org.

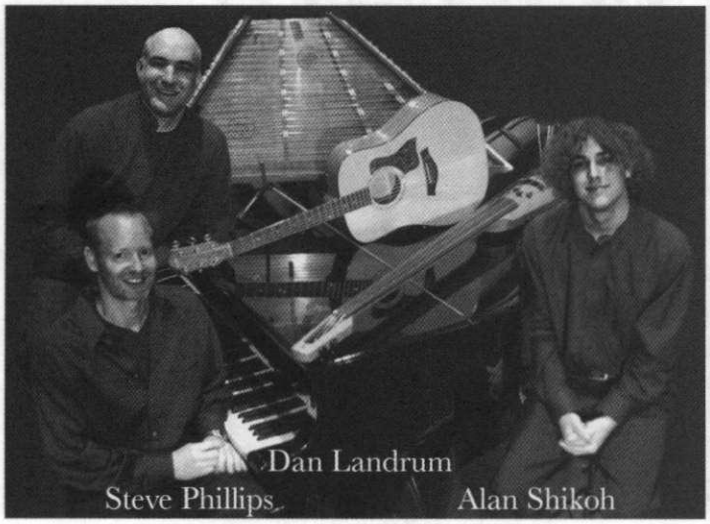
June 23–24 • Tullahoma, TN
Paul Pyle Dulcimer Daze. MD. Potluck, jamming, vendors, open stage. Info: Fred Sackleh, 201 Short Springs Rd., Tullahoma TN 37388, 931-455-0347, fjsackleh@cafes.net.

June 23–25• Waynesville, OH
Old Tyme Music Festival at Caesar's Creek Pioneer Village. Concerts, open stage, workshops for MD, banjo, guitar, fiddle. Info: John Noftsger, PO Box 224, Spring Valley, OH 45370, 937-862-5551, strothers.com/ccpv.htm.

June 23–25 • Farmington, PA
Laurel Highlands Dulcimer Workshop. HD workshops and open mike concert at Benner's Meadow Campground. Info: Brett Ridgeway, 330-221-6404, fbridgeway@juno.com.

Continue on next page.

Chattanooga Dulcimer Festival



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E-mail: Maureen Sel@AOL.com www.maureensellers.com -Room Reservations- New Harmony Inn- 1-800-782-8605

June 23–25 • Signal Mountain, TN
Chattanooga Dulcimer Festival. HD, MD workshops, concerts. Info: Dan Landrum, 423-886-3966, danlandrum.com.

June 24–30 • Blue Mt. Lake, NY
Northeast Dulcimer Symposium. MD, HD, fiddle, singing, percussion, dulcimer building. Workshops, concerts, jams. Info: David Moore, PO Box 358, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701, info@nedulcimer.org, nedulcimer.org.

June 25–30 • Bardstown, KY
Kentucky Music Week. Instruction in HD, MD, other instruments, basket making, singing, concerts. Info: Nancy Barker, Box 86, Bardstown, KY 40004. 502-348-5237, kentuckymusicweek.com

July 2–14 • Westminster, MD
Common Ground on the Hill. HD, MD. Two week-long sessions of instruction, singing, songwriting, dance, percussion. Info: Common Ground on the Hill. Includes HD, MD. WMC, Westminster, MD 21157, 410-857-2771, commongroundonthehill.com.

July 2–7 • Urbana, OH
Shady Grove Appalachian Dulcimer Camp. MD instruction (all levels), concerts, jamming. Info: Sweetwater, PO Box 164, Covington, OH 45318. 937-473-5176, shadygrove@sweetwaterfolk.com, sweetwaterfolk.com.

July 8–9 • Westminster, MD
Common Ground American Music & Arts Festival. Music, singing, drumming, dance, multi-cultural foods. Info: Common Ground on the Hill, WMC, Westminster, MD 21157, 410-857-2771, commongroundonthehill.com.

July 9–Aug. 13 • Elkins, WV
Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops. Five weeks of classes, concerts, dances. Includes some MD, HD. Info: Augusta Heritage Center, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV 26241, 304-637-1209, augustaheritage.com.

July 9–Aug 12 • Swannanoa, NC
The Swannanoa Gathering. Week-long workshops in the folk arts. (Dulcimer Week HD, MD 7/9-15). Info: Swannanoa Gathering, Warren Wilson College, PO Box 9000, Asheville, NC 28815, 828-298-3434 or 828-771-3761, swangathering.org.

July 9–14 • East Durham, NY
Catskills Irish Arts Week. HD class. Info: 800-434-FEST, east-durham.org/irishartsweek/ or Karen Ashbrook at mail@karenashbrook.com.

July 13–16 • Evart, MI
Dulcimer Funfest. Mainly HD, some MD. Concerts, workshops, open stage, jamming. Camping available. Info: Donna Beckwith, 817 Innes NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, 616-459-6716, dulcimers.com/evartpage.html.

July 20–22 • Houston, TX
Bayou City Old Time Music & Dulcimer Festival. Info: Gordon and Sandy White, 281-449-1632, geocities.com/bayoucityfestival, gswhite@hal-pc.org.

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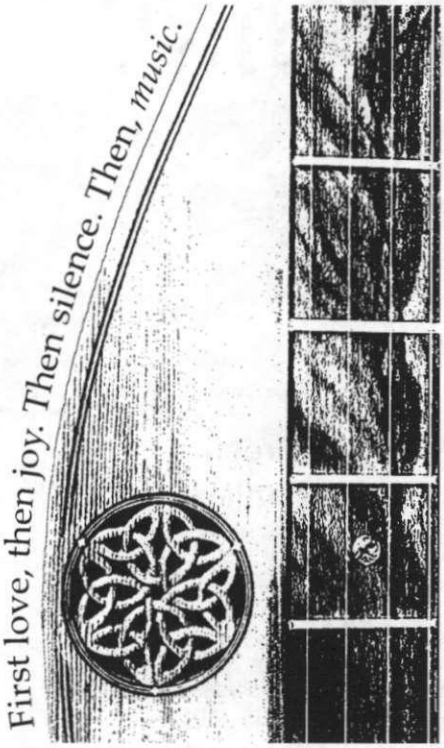

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E-mail: info@nedulcimer.org. See the web site: http://www.nedulcimer.org

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Illinois ARTS council

July 21–23 • Binghamton, NY
Cranberry Dulcimer & Autoharp Gathering. HD, MD, autoharp. Workshops, concerts, open stage, contra-dancing, jamming. Info: Ed Ware, 1259 Fowler Place, Binghamton, NY 13903, 607-669-4653, e.ware@ieee.org, CranberryDulcimer.com.

July 23–28 • Kansas City, MO
Heritage Dulcimer Camp. HD, MD (all levels). Jam sessions, workshops, open stage, concerts. Info: Sharon Lindenmeyer, 785-472-4285, slndmlyr@informatics.net, heritagedulcimercamp.org.

July 23–29 • Brasstown, NC
Dulcimer Celebration. MD, HD. Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, One Folk School Road, Brasstown, NC 28902, 800-365-5724. folkschool.org.

July 26–29 • Mt. View, AR
Mountain Dulcimer Workshop, Ozark Folk Center. Beginning-intermediate levels. Classes, jams, concerts. Info: Ozark Folk Center, PO Box 500, Mountain View, AR 72560, 870-269-3851, ozarkfolkcenter@arkansas.com, ozarkfolkcenter.com.

June 28–29 • Louisville, KY
Kentucky Music Weekend. Concerts, workshops, dances, crafts at Iroquois Park. Info: Nancy Barker, Box 86, Bardstown, KY 40004, 502-348-5237, KYTreeFrog@aol.com, kentuckymusicweek.com.

July 28–Aug 5 • Mendeocino, CA
Lark in the Morning World Music & Dance Camp. Includes HD, MD workshops. Info: Lark Camp, PO Box 1176, Mendocino CA 95460, 707-964-4826, larkcamp.com.

July 31–Aug 3 • Mt. View, AR
HD Workshop at the Ozark Folk Center. Beginning and intermediate levels. Classes, jams, concerts. Info: Ozark Folk Center, PO Box 500, Mountain View AR 72560. 870-269-3851, ozarkfolkcenter@arkansas.com, ozarkfolkcenter.com.

August 4–6 • Ferrisburg, VT
Champlain Valley Folk Festival. MD. Concerts, dancing, workshops, storytelling, jam sessions, crafts. Info: Champlain Valley Festival, 202 Main St., Burlington VT 05401, 877-850-0206, cvfest.org.

August 6 • Lake Zurich, IL
Lake County Folk Festival. HD, MD, guitars, mandolins, banjos. Workshops, performances, jamming. Info: 847-302-7557, kmoretti@aol.com.

August 11–13 • Bradford, PA
Heart of the Alleghenys Music Festival at the University of Pittsburgh. HD, MD, guitar and fiddle. Workshops, jamming, contra dancing, concerts. Info: Lucinda Durkee, 716-676-2260, hotafest.com.

August 17–19 • Iuka, MS
Magnolia Dulcimer Club Fall Festival. Workshops, open stage, vendors, potluck supper. Info: Ruby Strickland, 903 E. Linden St., Corinth, MS 38834, 662-286-0197, sunny@nadata.net.

Continue on next page.

Sweetwater presents the 10th Annual

SHADY GROVE

Appalachian Dulcimer Camp

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AUGUST 18, 19, 20, 2006

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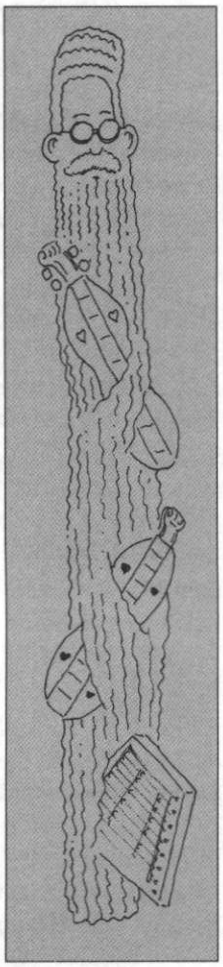

Little Rock Dulcimer Getaway - Third Annual

Produced by the Arkansas Dulcimer Society

Pulaski Heights Baptist Church
2200 Kavanaugh Blvd.
Little Rock Arkansas

Workshops on Friday & Saturday, August 11 & 12, 2006 with a Friday night concert as well as mid-day performances & jam opportunities.

♫ Mountain Dulcimer:

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Linda Brockinton
Neil Gaston
Scott Odena
Alice B. Rogers

♫ Hammered Dulcimer

Guy George
David Peterson
Weesa Boyd

♫ Guitar: Joe Morgan & Scott Odena
♫ Autoharp & Shape note singing: Charles Whitmer
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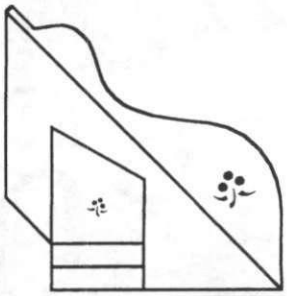
For information watch the web site at arkansasdulcimersociety.com or Contact Bob Bruce at robjbruce@cox-internet.com or Jim Munns at jimmunns@phbcarkansas.com

30th ANNUAL

CRANBERRY



DULCIMER & AUTOHARP GATHERING
July 22, 23, 24, 2005
Unitarian Universalist Church
Binghamton, New York

FEATURED PERFORMERS

Atwater-Donnelly Fretted Dulcimer
Maggie Sansone Hammered Dulcimer
Karen Mueller Autoharp

CONTACT:
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e.ware@ieee.org
Visit our website for more details:
www.cranberrydulcimer.com

August 18–20 • West Dover, VT
Dulcimer Daze. MD focus. Open stage, workshops, concerts. Info: Folk Craft Music, PO Box 88, Jacksonville, VT 05342. 802-368-7437, swewater@sover.net.

August 20–26 • Washington, ME
Meadowlark Music Camp. HD, MD, other folk instruments. Classes, concerts, jamming. Info: Jerry Bryant, 25 Columbia Dr., Amherst MA 01002, 413-256-6606, meadowlarkmusicamp.com.

Aug 28–Sept 3 • Missouri Valley, IA
Old-Time Country Music Contest and Festival. HD, MD, other instruments. Contests, workshops, jams. Info: Bob Everhart, PO Box 492, Anita IA 50020, 712-762-4363, oldtimemusic.bigstep.com.

August 24–27 • Midland, MI
Midland Dulcimer Festival. HD, MD jamming, workshops, concerts, dance. Info: Margaret Loper, 989-684-1499, loperme@aol.com, John Skaryd, 989-781-0849, skaryds@dulcimers.com.

August 25–27 • Brasstown, NC
Beginning Mountain Dulcimer. Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown NC 28902. 800-365-5724. folkschool.org.

Aug 27–Sept 2 • Brasstown, NC
Beginning Hammered Dulcimer. Info: John C. Campbell Folk School, One Folk School Road, Brasstown, NC 28902. 800-365-5724, folkschool.org.

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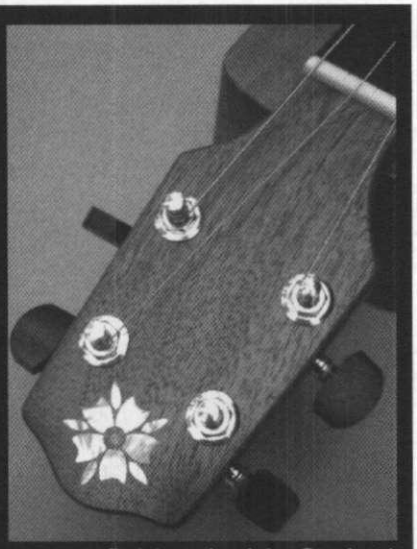
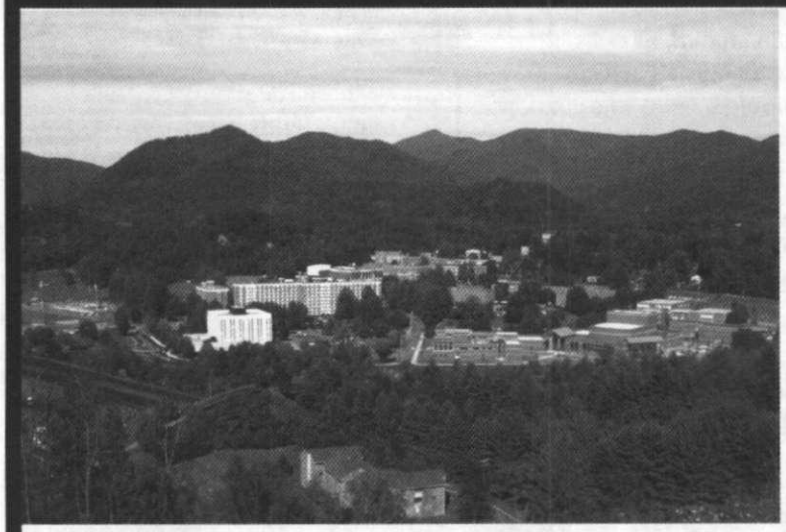


Dulcimer by John Stockard



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Mountain Dulcimer Tales & Traditions

by Ralph Lee Smith

Remarkable Tintype Photograph

Lisa Johnson, a DPN reader and an enthusiastic fan of old dulcimers, watches eBay and sends me email messages when she sees something interesting. I have bought a Homer Ledford dulcimer and a North Carolina scheitholt as a result of her alerts. Thank you, Lisa!

Last November, she called my attention to something absolutely astonishing. It was described by the seller as "Tintype Bearded Man String Instrument & Bow Dulcimer?" The illustration showed a tintype photograph of a seated man with a scheitholt on his lap, holding a bow! It is the first 19th century American photograph of either a scheitholt player or dulcimer player that I have ever seen. As far as I know, it is the first one that has been discovered.

I contacted the seller, an Iowa antiques dealer, and asked if she had any information about the photo or its subject. She replied that the photo had been "purchased at an auction of several small estates in NE Iowa." She had no other information.

Remarkably, there were only a few bidders, with the top bidder being $23 as the auction neared its close. I was much worried about the photo's dual appeal, to music historians and old photo buffs. I strongly suspected that the top bidder had put in a far higher maximum than $23! With two minutes to go, I put in a bid of $235, which immediately revealed that the $23 bidder had a put in a maximum bid of $177. If I had not bid, he/she would have gotten the photo for nearly nothing. As it is, I got it for $179.50. I'll worry about the mortgage next month.

Tintype Photography

In addition to its extreme rarity, the photo is full of social history. The tintype photographic process was introduced in 1853, and it immediately established itself as the photographic method of choice for itinerant photographers. The making of deguerreotypes and ambrotypes, the earliest forms of commercial photography, involve a difficult and sensitive chemical and photographic process. The photos were usually taken in a studio setting; the subjects were usually not poor or working class people; and going to a photographer's studio to get your picture taken was something of an event. The process, though cumbersome, produced beautiful photographs. Daguerreotypes and ambrotypes have a luminous, three-dimensional, lifelike quality that, in my opinion, modern photographers and photographic methods are hard-pressed to duplicate.

Tintypes traded lesser photographic quality for an easier production process, lower cost, and a highly durable product that you could carry around or even put in the mail to family or friends. The images were made directly on small plates cut from thin sheets of iron by tin shears. The plate was coated with a substance called collodion, a viscous mixture of celluloses. Before taking the picture, the collodion-coated plate was sensitized with silver nitrate. After the picture was taken, the plate was placed in a fixing bath to stabilize the image and prevent further exposure. At this point, no image was visible on the plate. But when the plate was immersed in a bath of potassium cyanide, the image appeared in about 30 seconds, as if by magic. And it didn't come off.

From 1853 until the 1880s when newer photographic methods largely supplanted tintypes, itinerant tintype photographers roamed the land, taking thousands of images and selling them for ten or fifteen cents each. They brought photographs and photography to everyone for the first time. In doing so, they created an enormous body of folk and genre images, of which this photo of a scheitholt player is one. Another is the only known photo of Billy the Kid.

Reverse Images

Daguerrotypes, ambrotypes and tintypes all produce reverse images-that

is, the kind of image you see of yourself in a mirror. When photographing players of musical instruments, itinerant photographers often instructed the subjects to switch the head of the instrument from right to left, so that it would look "right" in the reverse image. This can be seen on many old photos of banjo players, in which the fifth peg faces downward in the photo!

Compensation for the reverse image can be seen in the way that the player is holding his scheitholt and bow. It is obvious that, as he is holding them, he can neither fret the instrument nor bow it. Instead, he is holding the instrument rather awkwardly by the head and has laid the bow across the strings near the head, at a place where he would of course not bow it. The itinerant photographer who took the picture instructed him to switch the head of the scheitholt from left to right, and to hold the bow in his left hand.

The photo as reproduced here is somewhat larger than the actual plate, which is 2 x 3¼ inches. The four corners have been cut off by the tin shears, perhaps to create a simple decorative effect.

Who is he? Was his picture taken in Iowa? And don't you wish that the top of the scheitholt were visible? We would love to know more, but we can be grateful for what we have. What an addition to the growing body of scheitholt/dulcimer history!

The 8th Yangqin Congress: Beijing 2005

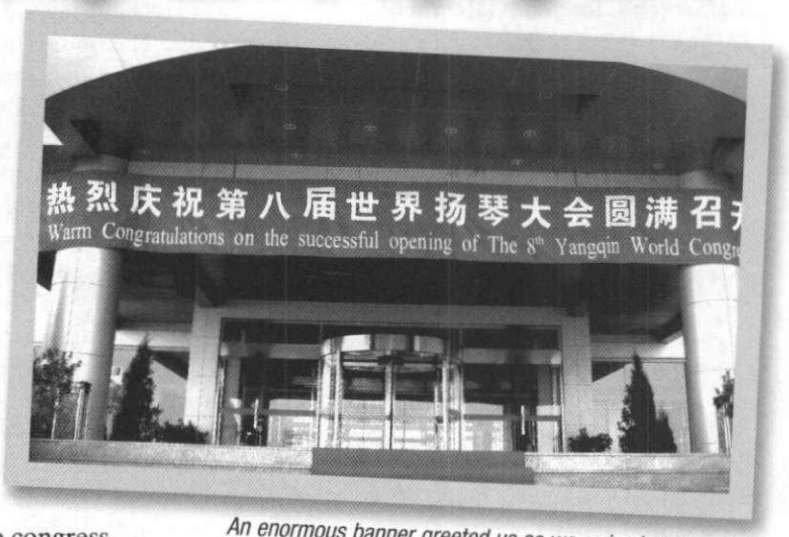
by Mitzie Collins
Rochester, New York

Amazed—and a long way from home. Those were my thoughts when I saw the 40-foot banner stretched over the door: "Congratulations on the Successful Opening of the 8th Yangqin Congress, Beijing, China." Inside the large lobby of the Splendor International Conference Center, 30 miles east of the center of Beijing, hundreds of people were buzzing around. A babble of animated conversations greeted my ears: Chinese punctuated by German and Hungarian with an occasional word of English every now and then. Organized chaos surrounded two tables. By going to the wrong table first, I learned that one was for citizens of China and the other for everyone else. Large instrument cases on wheels, very big and slightly trapezoidal, crowded the hallways and the lounge area.

Why did I go?

Why was I here, half way around the world from my home in Rochester, New York? For two reasons: I have long wanted to visit China; visit not just as a tourist, but in a way that would give me an opportunity to interact with the culture. I have also wanted to learn more about the world dulcimer family-especially the yangqin, the Chinese hammered dulcimer. I've been a dulcimer player since 1970, the dawn of the "dulcimer revival" in the U.S. Through making recordings, performing at festivals, and teaching courses in world music, I've become increasingly more interested in the many international varieties of the hammered dulcimer. I was ready to embrace first hand the larger world of dulcimers.

My expectations were very high all through the extended process of planning the trip, getting a visa, and applying to give a presentation. Indeed, the Cimbalom World Association's biennial congress in October of 2005 was definitely everything I had hoped it would be and a great deal more. The formality of the programs, the official government sponsorship of the congress, and the seriousness with which instruction on the yangqin is conducted were as unfamiliar to me as the yangqin itself. I am accustomed to the tradition of treating the hammered dulcimer as a folk instrument, with instruction and performances conducted well outside of the "classical" music establishment. In China the yangqin is taught in conservatories and is considered a major classical instrument. The organizing committee for the 2005 Congress included high government officials as well as conservatory heads, professors and composers.



An enormous banner greeted us as we arrived at the hotel

Describing the Congress

Trying to describe the Congress in Beijing is a challenge. It was five days filled with the sounds that dulcimer players love most: the sounds of hammers striking strings and the sounds of ringing and echoing notes. But this was no ordinary festival. This was a logistical, multi-national, tour de force; underwritten, organized and directed by a large committee of Chinese teachers and performers, with the authority, support and advice of the Cimbalom World Association (CWA), an international dulcimer organization based in Hungary with members from all over the world. There were 458 participants; 392 from China and 66 from 18 other countries. All of the daytime presentations were given in a 500-seat auditorium on the conference center's third floor. I treasure the handsome 119-page program book with color photographs and biographies of the participants. Getting your book signed, and signing books for others, was a wonderful way to smile and nod and exchange greetings without being able to speak a common language.

There was a separate six-page booklet listing the performers and their selections for each day, plus additional programs provided by some performing groups-and even more programs for the opening and closing concerts. Other mementos of the Congress included an enormous poster, a group photo (all 458 of us) and a leather folder encasing an official certificate of participation.

Opening and closing concerts

The opening and closing concerts of the congress were held at the Concert Hall of the National Library, a major venue in downtown Beijing. The sheer effort of moving hundreds of people, by many buses, twice, to another location was beyond anything I have ever experienced at any conference or festival—and I have attended quite a few. Each trip into Beijing, through

Hiroshi Saito of Japan playing the Hungarian cimbalom

The stage is crowded at the end of the evening with Chinese performers taking pictures of the cimbalom and hackbrett

Sally Whytehead of England demonstrates her James Jones dulcimer after the final concert

rush-hour traffic, took about two hours. I think this enormous undertaking was built into the schedule because it was important for the organizing committee of the Congress to have a high profile presence in downtown Beijing.

The opening concert began energetically with an ensemble of 41 yangqin players and 9 percussionists, and continued through a varied program to a finale featuring a full Western orchestra accompanying a double-yangqin concerto composed by Xiang Zuhua, the leading yangqin professor at the Beijing Conservatory. Zuhua is the vice president of the CWA and is considered the elder statesman of yangqin instruction and composition in China.

Altogether, the scope and scale of this opening concert exceeded any concert I have ever seen in the world of American hammered dulcimers. The closing concert featured the participation of every performer of the Congress, and was only slightly less overwhelming than the opening one. The concert conclusion was grand: 40 yangqin plus 15 world dulcimers filled the stage. We played a composition by Li Lingling, an outstanding teacher, internationally acclaimed performer, CWA board member, and a member of the organizing committee. Even though it was impossible for me to travel to China with an instrument, I did get to play in the final concert by joining English dulcimer player Sally Whytehead in a two-person, one-dulcimer duet.

The Cimbalom World Association

The Cimbalom World Association and its accomplishments are as remarkable as the actual Congress. Founded by Viktoria Herenscar of Hungary, the CWA held its first congress in 1991 in Budapest. Since then, the CWA has promoted a congress every two years in a different country. The aim of the CWA is to bring together artists and builders of the world dulcimer family - which includes the Hungarian cimbalom; Czech cymbal; German, Swiss and Austrian hackbrett; Chinese yangqin and Iranian santur - and to promote the instruction, growth in popularity, and recognition of dulcimer music in each country. CWA Congress titles can be confusing: they are titled by the particular name of the sponsoring country's world dulcimer family member; thus, in 2003, the Congress in Appenzell, Switzerland, was named the "7th Hackbrett Welt Kongress."

A Congress is different than a festival

It became clear to me that a congress and a festival are quite different. Sally Whytehead, Chairwoman of the Nonesuch Dulcimer Club of England and a CWA board member who has attended all but two of the congresses, explained that at a congress almost everyone attending is a participant; at one time on stage, and at another time as a member of the audience. There is no division between performers and the audience. The primary purpose of a CWA congress is to educate dulcimer players about the music and performance style of the many varieties of hammered dulcimers found worldwide-not to provide entertainment for an audience that is unfamiliar with the instruments. That said, the performances I saw were all engaging and entertaining.

Sharing cultures

Though there was no opportunity for that mainstay of American dulcimer festivals, the jam session, there were many instances of sharing from one dulcimer culture to another. The Chinese players were fascinated with the much smaller santurs and hung on every note of the Iranian performance. Attendees tried each other's instruments and listened raptly to playing styles wildly different from their own. There were several international collaborations. Hiroshi Saito of Japan, a current cimbalom student both in Hungary and Slovakia, and Brian Lai of China, created a cimbalom/yangqin jazz improvisation on the music of J.S. Bach. Celtic harper Greg Wilson of Australia, at the Congress to perform with Jackie Luke, was invited to join with two Chinese players for their stage presentation. My sharing has continued since the Congress. I've exchanged compact discs with several players, and via e-mail I'm discussing playing styles and instrument history with Gillian Alcock

Continued on next page.

of Australia, a distinguished instrument builder and dulcimer historian, and with Brian Lai, a formidable performer and fluent English speaker with a strong interest in American dulcimer traditions.

In a post-congress e-mail, Sally Whytehead recalled that "the young Chinese attendees were fascinated with every aspect of my dulcimer, my sticks, techniques, even the accessories case I had home sewn before I left. Comfortable with technology, they snapped and videoed everything, and demanded numerous photos of themselves with their western visitors. But their innocent delight was a total contrast to the sophistication of their playing and their skill and dedication to their musical art."

The U.S. Representatives

The United States representation at the Congress consisted of two people: Paul Beck from Seattle, Washington, and me. That small number is no doubt due to distance and expense; we hope that many more U.S. players will participate in the next congress, to be held in October of 2007 in Oberamergau, Germany. Paul and I did our best, but we surely didn't adequately represent the wide variety of professional and amateur players in the United States. Paul, a cimbalom player, gave a particularly American twist to the cimbalom in his performance of the jazzy tune "Big Noise from Winetka."

Through photos, I shared some of the United States history of dulcimer playing in my PowerPoint presentation on New York State historical dulcimers. Instrument builders from the United States were well-represented by the James Jones dulcimer played by Sally Whytehead and the Nick Blanton instrument played by Jackie Luke.

The Yangqin

The yangqins played at the congress were nothing like the small "butterfly" yangqins I had seen in the United States. Most of the instruments at the congress were about 45 inches across the front and only slightly smaller front to back. They had many bridges, and most had a tuning system that included rollers under the strings for fine tuning. The yangqins had from two to five strings per course, usually two in the lower notes and five nearer to the top. Most middle courses had three or four strings. Players used very lightweight hammers that were close to 12 inches long. Some yangqins had a damper pedal, much like those found on Hungarian cimbaloms. All of the yangqins rested on elaborately carved wooden stands, and I just couldn't resist buying a stand for myself. I managed to get it all the way home with only a few bumps and scratches.

Yangqin Music

Yangqin music dominated the Congress, and I can only give general impressions of the hours of yangqin playing I heard. Most, but not all, of the music was based on pentatonic (5 note) scales. There were very few pieces in waltz or jig time. There was almost no improvisation. All of the Chinese performers at the congress played composed or arranged music; some used scores during performance. Though a number of compositions were based on folk tunes, and traditional Chinese instruments were played in several ensembles, folk performers of the yangqin were not in evidence at this congress.

Many pieces were long, with contrasting lyrical and rhythmic sections, and had titles that reflected some description of nature. Numerous performances presented veritable orchestras of yangqins. Singing was a part of only a few performances. Some very exciting techniques were displayed, such as maintaining a tremolo with one hand while playing single notes with the other hand; playing with hammers with picks on the ends that could be reversed to pluck the strings; creating a harp-like glissando by dragging the hammers across the strings, and "bending" a note by moving a thick ring along the length of the string like a "bottleneck" guitar style. The dynamic range of the yangqin music was often wide, ranging from exquisitely soft to insistently loud. The overall texture of the music was very dense—there was a lot of tremolo.

In the busy schedule there was no workshop that explained the most common tuning scheme of the yangqin or its history and recent development. There were, however, extensive sales displays by three Chinese manufacturers of yangqins. I spent as much time there as I could, hammering timidly on the large unfamiliar instruments. I left the Congress with more questions about the yangqin than when I arrived with-but at least now I understand how little I know about the Chinese dulcimer.

Photos tell the story

Everyone attending the Congress had a camera or two, and photographing instruments, groups of people, performers, and performances was a constant part of every activity. I was intrigued with the difference in instruments and took many pictures of instruments and performers, especially of the yangqin. Video cameras were everywhere. In addition to those of the audience members, official videos were made of all the presentations by an array of cameras set up in the middle of the auditorium.

Communication

How did we talk to each other? For this Congress, English and Mandarin Chinese were the official languages. All signs, banners, schedules and programs were in Chinese and English. Most, but not all, of the announcements and papers were given with translations into English or Chinese as needed. There were four translators, tireless and indispensable, who worked full-time, announcing programs and helping non-Chinese speakers with questions about performances, practicing and presentations. There were, however, still times when no translation was available, and information had to be gleaned in whatever way was possible-or was never understood at all.

Performers from other countries

The cultural and musical importance of the cimbalom in Central and Eastern Europe was represented by outstanding young players as well as by veteran performers. Conservatory student Daniel Skala of the Czech Republic performed an intricate arrangement of a piano

Johannes Fuchs of Switzerland, Helen Cerenkova of the Czech Republic and Mitzie Collins of the U.S. pose at the Great Wall of China, on a group excursion of Congress attendees.

Gillian Alcock of Australia and Mitzie Collins surrounded by 5 Chinese yangqin students for one of many photo sessions at the Congress

Viktoria Herenscar, CWA president.

piece by Janacek, and eighteen-year old Mykhaylo Zakhariya of Ukraine played Hungarian tunes with a fiery technique. Helena Cerenkova of the Czech Republic and Katerina Zlatnikov of Germany, both influential performers and teachers, played compelling contemporary selections that took advantage of the rhythmic possibilities offered by the cimbalom's damping system. Victoria Herenscar of Hungary displayed a comprehensive technique and musicianship that was stunning, particularly in light of the fact that she was constantly busy in her role as president of the CWA.

Swiss and German musicians, playing hackbretts, presented both contemporary and traditional styles. Barbara Schirmer of Switzerland performed with an avant garde technique influenced by mallet percussion that featured rhythmic complexity and included 4-hammer playing. Johannes Fuchs of Switzerland and Anja Kroeker of Germany played traditional dance tunes in a style that would have been familiar to American dulcimer players. Celtic tunes were played by Jackie Luke of Australia and Sally Whytehead of England.

A memorable event

"For me," commented American Paul Beck, who also attended the 7th Congress in Appenzell, "the most memorable thing about the congress was all the new and old friends I got to meet, spend time with, and listen to as they performed. But there's also this, which occurred to me when I was describing the Congress to a friend here: 'I was on Chinese National television playing an American tune on a Hungarian hammered dulcimer with an Australian woman playing an Irish drum. Now that's world music.'"

What I will always remember from this congress is the music-thrilling cascades of notes, tremolos, soaring melodies, and rapid scales. Dulcimers alone—in duos, trios, and large groups, and with other instruments. I can recall with clarity the expectant attention of the audience and the intense focus of the performers and the sound of many strings and the long ringing sounds fading to silence-followed by thunderous applause.

I'll also remember the people who made the music, all of us drawn to far-off Beijing by a common love of our many-stringed instrument. Whether our tradition was that of formal, notated music or of improvised dance tunes, whether we were playing on large and heavy instruments or small and portable ones, we were all part of the one large dulcimer family.

Mitzie Collins fell in love with the hammered dulcimer at the 1969 Fox Hollow Folk Festival in Peterboro, New York. Since then she's made recordings and continues to perform at festivals, churches, museums and libraries. Check out Mitzie's performance schedule at samplerfolkmusic.com.

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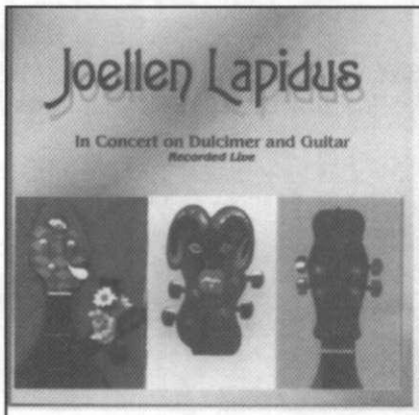

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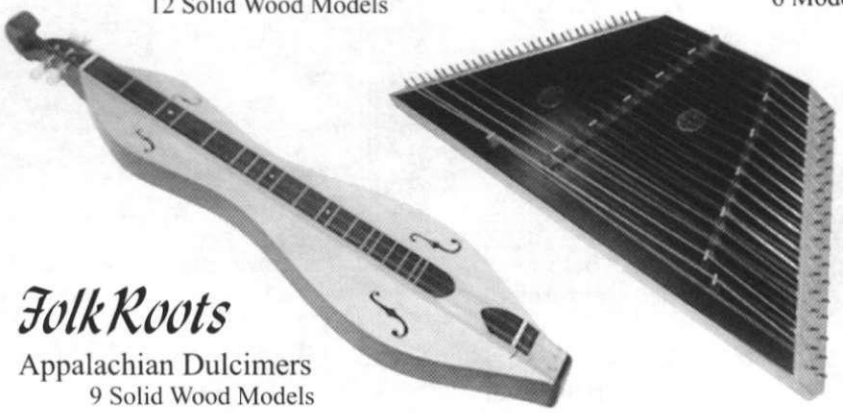

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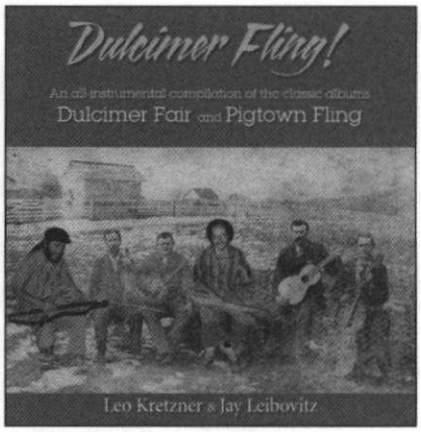

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W
Mo

by Sally Azbill
Louisville, Kentucky

When I stepped into Warren A. May's shop on College Square in Berea, Kentucky, on an early Saturday morning, it was already busy. Warren was putting the finishing touches on a twin set of cherry dulcimers, while a couple from Tennessee waited to purchase one. Each of Warren's dulcimers is hand-signed and numbered, and this was number 13,248. Other customers browsed the shop and listened when he played a few songs, and explained how to play the dulcimer using his special "tick-tock" method.

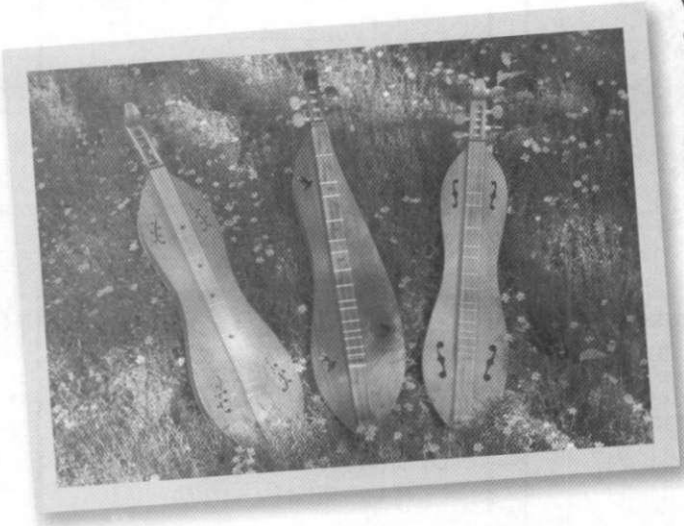
My first dulcimer was built by Warren May, and is number 287. It is as beautiful and sturdy today as when it was purchased as a Christmas gift for me in 1978 and it has a wonderful, warm tone. My daughters also own dulcimers from his shop, so it is always a pleasure for me to return and see the beautiful instruments and woodworking displays. Warren has also built furniture since his days as a student and has a masters degree in Industrial Education.

Warren and his wife, Frankye, were both school teachers in Eastern Kentucky when students told them about the dulcimers that their families treasured. He played guitar and became interested in the instruments, even more so after seeing kit parts in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. He studied early Kentucky dulcimers and began working on his first instruments in 1972. Homer Ledford, a well known dulcimer builder from Winchester, Kentucky, was an early influence for Warren's basic mountain-style building. In 1977 Warren and Frankye quit teaching and moved to Berea, Kentucky where the excellent quality of crafts offered was enhanced by a strong atmosphere of traditional and authentic music.

Warren likes to use walnut or cherry for his dulcimers. He also uses poplar, which was the original favorite of mountain dulcimer builders. The first instruments he built had wire staple frets, but he quickly moved to guitar frets. Once he decided to make dulcimer building his career, he began working to make the dulcimer more functional, user friendly, and to improve its status as a musical instrument.

Over the past 34 years, he has made significant improvements while maintaining the integrity of the traditional dulcimer (mountain scale, solid wood, hand-carved scroll and tuning pegs) and still giving people choices for their particular instrument. Many mountain dulcimer builders are not shy about showing their folk-style soundholes and personal decorations on the fret boards. Warren's knothole flower and vine work is a beautiful example of using a natural knothole and embellishing it. The hummingbird is a favorite original soundhole and the one most requested by his customers.

Warren and I talked about the tone given to the instrument by different woods. Dulcimers made of all walnut, cherry or poplar give the purest tone. As a builder, Warren feels that walnut gives a deeper, warmer tone, and is mellow and forgiving. Cherry gives a clear and bright tone, good for finger picking. Poplar produces a bold tone and has the mountain ring and strong voice of the old instruments. Butternut is a favored wood that enhances the tone and



"Warren
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ked about the tone ument by different made of all walnut, ve the purest tone."

is very resonant when used for the top of a walnut or cherry dulcimer.

Warren makes three dulcimer models: a regular-sized hourglass, a wide-body hourglass, and a special hourdrop-style which he developed. Grover geared tuners are now offered as an option for easier, faster tuning.

Warren prefers playing in Ionian (DAA) tuning because it is bolder and stronger for his chord style. He uses three basic chords (D, G and A) and embellishes them with 7ths or minors. Years ago, a guitar player showed him that playing the guitar is like a heartbeat (tick-tock) and Warren developed this strum for the dulcimer.

The dulcimer is now the official instrument of Kentucky, and Warren was in Frankfort to celebrate the signing of the bill on February 13, 2001. In 2002, he was inducted into the Stringed Instrument Makers Hall of Fame in the Georgetown, Kentucky museum.

In 1986 the Smithsonian Institution ordered one hundred of Warren's cherry dulcimers to offer through their catalog. Nancy Johnson Barker, coordinator of Kentucky Music Week and Kentucky Music Weekend in Louisville, bought Warren's 100th dulcimer, made of burl walnut. Other Warren May dulcimer owners and players include Dick Albin, Annie McFee, George and Rhody Jackson, Danny Dutton (Kentucky Opera), Nancy Eversole Flanagan (The Kentucky Woman), and Jennifer Rose. Dinah Ansley plays a May dulcimer and shows it on the cover of her CD *Along the Way.* Warren's work has been featured in books and articles, including *Southern Hands* by Jan Arnow, *Kentucky Crafts* by Phillis George, and *Heart and Hands: Musical Instrument Makers of America* by Jake Jacobson.

A favorite story relates how Martha Layne Collins, then governor of Kentucky, journeyed to Japan to encourage the Toyota Company to locate in her state. She brought along Kentucky gifts for the owner, Mr. Toyoda. One was a Warren A. May cherry dulcimer with hummingbird soundholes. When officials later returned to Japan to finalize arrangements, they were greeted with "My Old Kentucky Home" played on Warren's dulcimer.

Warren May's style is free and happy. He says players should not be burdened by musical technicality. They should be able to play favorite songs with feeling and the confidence to do it their way. His objective is to provide an instrument for people to do just that.

When you are near Berea, Kentucky, visit the Warren A. May Woodworker Shop and find yourself relaxing in another time with the soothing sounds of the mountain dulcimer, the scent of freshly arranged flowers and newly-finished wood creations. Be sure to choose a dulcimer from the vast selection in stock and play a few tunes before you leave this beautiful place.

Warren A. May
110 Center Street
Berea, Kentucky 40403
859-986-9293
warrenamay.com
kaht.net

Sally Frazier Azbill is a member of the Louisville Dulcimer Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

An Interview with Lorraine Hammond

by Terry Carstensen
Norwell, Massachusetts

She has the patience of a grandmother, the spirit of a sixteen year-old, and the musical talent of a master. Lorraine Hammond teaches and performs with dulcimer, Celtic harp, mandolin, and five string banjo; but when asked what is her favorite instrument her answer has been the same for forty years. "The mountain dulcimer is my musical voice."

I first met Lorraine seven years ago when I decided, at age forty-eight, I wanted to take banjo lessons. I am a mom who has never played any musical instrument (unless you count wooden spoons on pots and pans), knew no music theory, and my singing is shushed in church. Any teacher I found would have to be exceptionally kind and patient. And Lorraine is both. I knew as soon as I met this gentle lady that it was going to be okay. For two years Lorraine taught me to play the banjo; then she introduced me to the dulcimer and I immediately understood her love affair with it. She teaches not just the mechanics of her instruments, but also their potential and depth. During the past seven years our teacher-student relationship has developed into a lasting friendship; and I have recently learned how this remarkable woman has become the legend she is today.

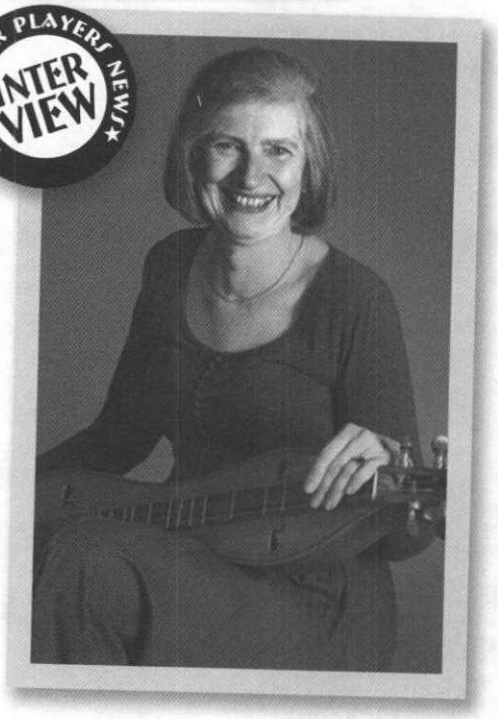
Lorraine grew up in West Cornwall, Connecticut where she began playing the banjo at age twelve and the mandolin at fourteen. The barn dances at Hart's barn, and the square dances on the old covered bridge captured her attention. Though school was demanding and work on her family's chicken farm was mandatory, music consumed her. At night she played and in the daytime she practiced her fingerings on her desk during chemistry class.

But the sounds of the dulcimer haunted her, and by 1962 when she attended Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont, the instrument obsessed her. An evening with Margaret McArthur, a Vermont folksinger and dulcimer master, convinced Lorraine that those three strings could express more than any other instrument she played. After that, it took Lorraine only eight weeks to convince her roommate to buy one and in return Lorraine would teach her how to play it.

Lorraine bought her first dulcimer in the 1963 when she was a volunteer working at the Peace Action Center, in Washington, D.C. She remembers with pride it was a three-string dulcimer made by A.W. Jeffries of Staunton, Virginia, number 113. She was soon playing in a Vermont band, the Winooski Valley Maple Saps. Since her first Jeffries instrument, she has been given many more dulcimers, each of which represents her development as a player. She has worked in collaboration with dulcimer builders, beginning with Walt and Mike Martin at Sunhearth Dulcimers, and subsequently with Dwain Wilder of Bear Meadow Dulcimers, and with Vermont builder Jeremy Seeger.

Lorraine's innovations include the design of a superb built-in pickup for the dulcimer. She met Larry Fishman of Fishman Transducers who pioneered a pickup for the acoustic bass. Larry, an accomplished jazz bass player, was intrigued when Lorraine played a jazz tune for him on her dulcimer. She inspired him to develop a transducer pickup unique to her instrument.

Lorraine's style is both simple and extremely complex. She integrates a mandolin technique and flat picks in bluegrass style. Margaret MacArthur supported her notion that we should be free to explore any kind of music on the dulcimer. In the late 1970's Lorraine recorded a Djangho Reinhart Gypsy jazz tune in Germany on the long out-of-print LP, *The Free Spirit.* English players Roger Nicholson and Jake Walton impressed Lorraine with the delicacy of their playing,



and Leo Kretzner captured her attention with the rock 'n roll energy of his Irish fiddle tunes. John Molineux, an inventive player from Brittany who toured the U.S. in the 1970's, encouraged Lorraine as she developed her "blues slide" style.

Lorraine's singing expresses the poignancy and sincerity of the old ballads, while her playing conveys the subtle emotions in each song. She has always loved listening to the music of Jean Ritchie and savors spare way Jean uses the dulcimer to complement ballads. However, of all the famous musicians Lorraine has played with and learned from, she says her greatest influence was Oscar DeGreenia. He was a migrant worker on the farm where she grew up; and he sang his tales of the past without the accompaniment of a musical instrument or other singers. As a child she spent many hours listening to him and learning to dig deep into the essence of a song.

Lorraine's transition from a three-string dulcimer to a four-string dulcimer was difficult for her. In the 1970's she went to the Old Dominion Folk Festival in Norfolk Virginia where she met Mike

Martin of Sunhearth Dulcimers. He told her he would like to give her a dulcimer; and she responded by choosing one that gave her the greatest challenge, a four-string dulcimer. In the beginning she tuned the first three strings as she would her three-string dulcimer, then tuned the fourth string to sound as a drone. She was timid about this arrangement and put HO gauge model railroad spikes on the sides of her fingerboard so she could slip the fourth string off when she wanted to comfortably return to three strings. Gradually she mastered four-string techniques and now teaches four-string dulcimer workshops for three and four-string players. In the late 1960's Lorraine built a hammered dulcimer with guidance from Howie Mitchell. When she finished it, he sent her a silk-screened gold star. Once she began to play her homemade instrument, she found she missed having direct finger contact with the strings and again focused her attention on the three and four-stringed dulcimers.

As a student, I became interested in Lorraine's teaching and playing styles. One of her biggest challenges is that a student usually has no knowledge of the history from which dulcimer music comes. Lorraine explains, "The instrument has an ancient voice that makes it easy and appropriate to play traditional folk songs. The strongest living folk music seems to linger along the Appalachian Mountains chain. It often reflects the human situation in a way that contemporary music does not." Though Lorraine does play bluegrass on her dulcimer, she prefers the traditional sounds that pull a community together to dance and sing. Lorraine continues, "Our society has become too busy and chaotic for the beauty and the delicacy of the ancient voice to be heard. The dulcimer came to the United States around 1800 after a long history in northern Europe. It was fretted only under the string nearest the player with the remaining strings tuned as drones. Contemporary dulcimers fretted beneath all the strings still appear simple, but the playing gets complicated as the musician advances from one level to the next."

Just as Lorraine has continued to teach, she also has continued to learn. In 1986 she met Bennett Hammond, a master of the guitar, and together they have made a life of music. Their nonprofit corporation, "Great Acoustics" (www.greatacoustics.org) is "dedicated to American traditional music and music in the American tradition." They explore new sounds in old-time music and keep alive the tradition of the old ballads. During their marriage they have recorded six CD's together and provided the background soundtrack for two videos. Their most recent CD, *"Jingalo Gypsy"* (reviewed in volume #31, #1 of *Dulcimer Players News)* exemplifies their originality and skill. Lorraine has recorded five other dulcimer CD's, written three dulcimer books and recorded a series of Homespun instructional cassettes.

Lorraine passionately believes in sharing the magic of the mountain dulcimer and teaches both experienced and inexperienced students how to discover what the instrument can do. This year she will celebrate her twenty-fifth consecutive year as the primary organizer of the Spring Dulcimer Festival, formerly the Flower Carol Dulcimer Festival in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Her 2006 gig calendar includes teaching and performances at the John C. Campbell Folk School and the Mountain Collegium of Early Music (both in North Carolina), Kentucky Music Week, Summer Acoustic Music Weeks 1 and 2 in new Hampshire, the Nutmeg Dulcimer Festival in Connecticut, ongoing classes in music and literacy for pre-schoolers in Brookline, Massachusetts; and dulcimer, banjo and singing classes at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education in Massachusetts.

For decades Lorraine has captivated crowds of music-lovers and groups of skilled musicians with her variety of spirited, soulful and always entertaining songs. And as for this beginner-finally-turned-intermediate musician, I thank Lorraine for her patience, inspiration and for showing us the true magic of the mountain dulcimer.

Lorraine Hammond
146 High Street
Brookline, MA 02445
greatacoustics.org

Partial Discography

Jingalo Gypsy • Lorraine & Bennett Hammond, Snowy Egret Music

Love Has A Life Of Its Own • Lorraine & Bennett Hammond , Wizmak Records, Wingdale, NY

Hell Up Coal Holler with Gerald Milnes, Shanachie Records

An Exultation of Dulcimers with Jean Ritchie & Roger Nicholson, Greenhays

Beloved Awake • Front Hall Records

Cape and Island Ways • Lorraine & Bennett Hammond, Site Productions

Peace on Earth • Lorraine & Bennett Hammond, SoundWorks Inc.

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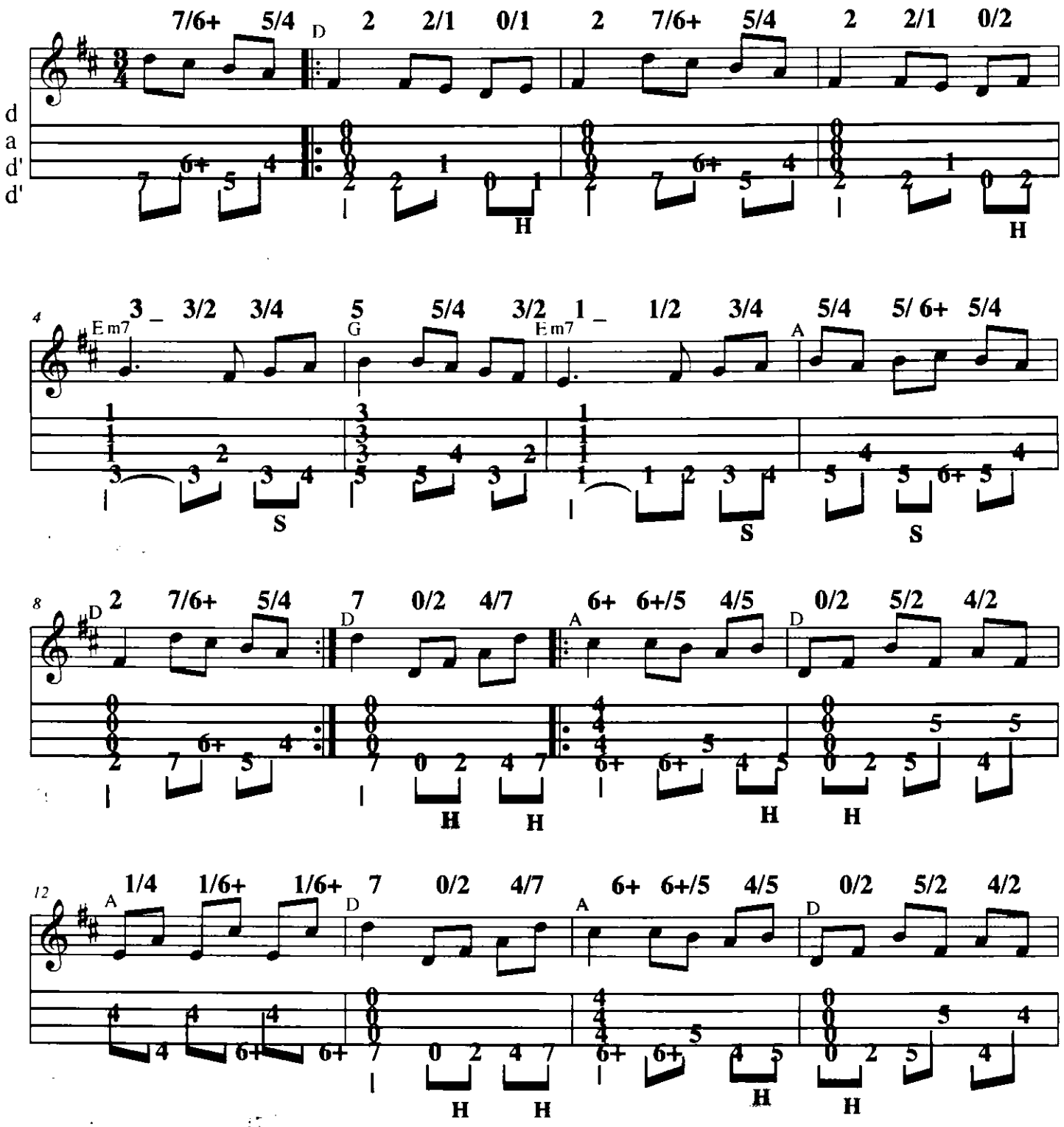
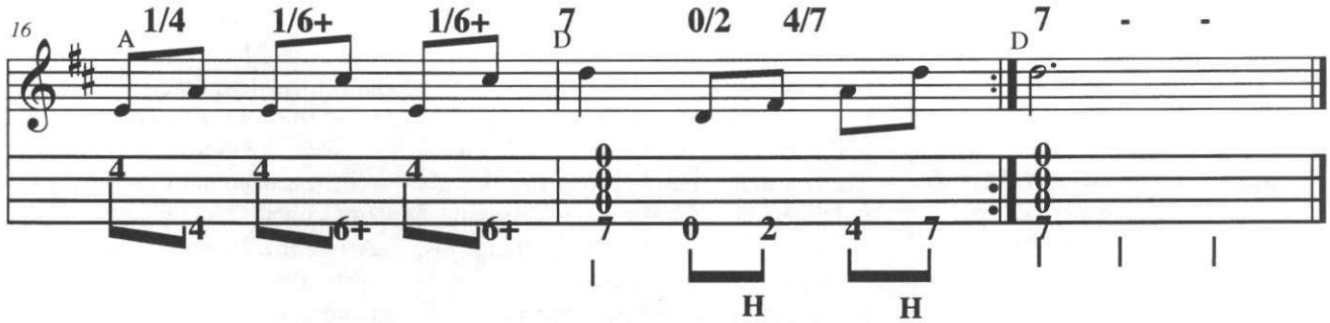
La Valse Des Jeunes Filles

Arr. © 2005, Lorraine Lee Hammond





La Valse Des Jeunes Filles is a lovely tune now popular in New England. I learned it from fiddler Donna Hebert of Chanterelle.

The fret numbers above the tune give the basic melody so 3 and 4 string players tuned all D (bagpipe or Galax tuning), DAD' DAD'D' will have the melody immediately.

The tablature shows the specific fingerings and string choices I use when I play the tune including some cross-picking between strings 1 and 2 which are tuned to the same pitch.

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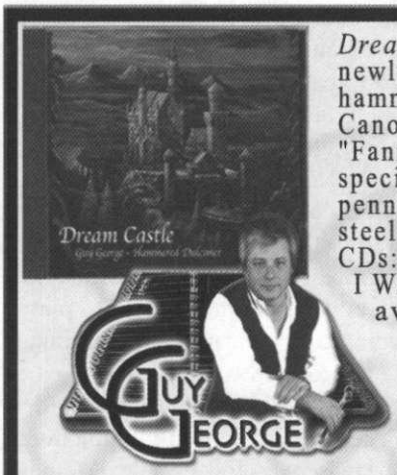

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June 2 - 4 Yellowbanks Festival - Owensboro, KY
June 9 - 11 Gebhard Woods - Morris, IL
June 26 - July 1 Kentucky Music Week, Bardstown
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Hammered Dulcimer Tales & Traditions

by Paul Gifford

A Dulcimer Trip in 1972 • Part 2

"In virtually all parts of the United States, most people had never heard nor seen the instrument. I had been playing it for a few years and wanted to travel around to see to what extent the dulcimer had been known and whether there were any players living." The dulcimer adventure continues as Paul Gifford and fiddler Jon Blasius head to Galax, Virginia…

We went back to Plainfield, picked up our friend Bill White, and headed south. Our destination was the annual fiddlers' convention in Galax, Virginia. We had been there the previous year and had had a great time. As usual, we made various stops at antique stores along the way, hoping for further discoveries. There were none, however.

We planned our itinerary so that we could visit Asel Gardner, in Kingwood, West Virginia, near Morgantown. Only recently I had met Patty Looman, who was originally from Mannington, West Virginia, but taught school in Pontiac, Michigan. I was playing at a public performance which she attended. She told me of her mother's dulcimer collection and her interest in the instrument. I told her about the Original Dulcimer Players Club and in May she went to a meeting in Sidney, Michigan. She played a dulcimer that had been recently made by Asel Gardner.

Mr. Gardner was a friendly man of 65 who showed us some instruments he had made. I learned that his two brothers Worley and Willis played, but he only made them. Apparently their main venue was the Mountain State Art & Craft Fair at Ripley. He began making them in 1966 and Worley and Willis played them at the fair, trying to drum up interest in the instrument. They were roughly based, in their rectangular outline, on an old one that Worley had, but the tuning scheme was the Gardners' own design. One curious one that Asel made was a "barrel" dulcimer. It had the usual rectangular outline, but the back was half-round, evoking a dulcimer which had actually been made from a barrel They probably had heard of this barrel dulcimer, incidentally, from Herman Matheny, a native West Virginian whose family had long been associated with the instrument. Asel gave me a pair of hickory hammers and his brother's recently made record, and we went on our way.

Galax was as crazy as usual. Fiddlers and banjo players, young and old, from near and far, gathered on the muddy red clay soil near their cars to try out the well-recorded tunes of the local tradition. Jon and I played around the parking lot and camp ground quite a bit. Everybody wanted me to play "Wildwood Flower," which I didn't know. I learned it, however, as well as other local favorites. Meanwhile, I tried to find fiddlers who could play tunes that I knew—like "Durang's Hornpipe." I recall playing that tune with an older fiddler who had come all the way from Kansas. Enough people seemed to gather around watching me play to attract the attention of a man wearing a white, western-cut suit, cowboy hat and boots who drove a white Cadillac with longhorn horns mounted to the hood. He represented the Virginia Country Music Association, he said, and wanted to hire me to play somewhere. As I wasn't from Virginia, however, I couldn't take the job.

One of Melton family, I think, had a booth there, selling mountain dulcimers; but otherwise very few people at Galax had heard or seen the instrument I was playing, however. In the two years I attended the convention, one person claimed to know of a dulcimer that was made in England in the 1790s, while several others knew Franklin George, the West Virginia musician who had one. On this trip I probably asked everybody I met if they knew of anyone who played the dulcimer or had one. We wanted to locate others in the area, but mostly came up empty-handed. With one exception. One man casually mentioned that he knew of a player named "Peanut" Cantrell, "somewhere in the McMinnville or Tullahoma area," in central Tennessee. We planned to head that way, so I noted his name.

We headed towards Durham, North Carolina, to stay at the home of Jon's uncle. I had heard of a player in Asheboro, North Carolina, but had no further details. This may have come from talking to someone at Galax the previous year or from an unusually informative letter from Rae Korson of the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress. It had just about every piece of information in its collection on the dulcimer, including a mention that Alan Jabbour had taped players there. We went to Asheboro, but left disappointed. The city was too large to ask on the street about a dulcimer player. Nobody knew what I was talking about.

The following weekend, we went to a small fiddlers' convention competition in Fries, Virginia, near Galax. We met Blanton Owen, a banjo player, and Richard Blaustein, a fiddling professor, and we all entered the contest under the name Oak Ridge Ramblers. I learned that Blanton Owen was involved in a large taping project of traditional musicians in the region, and he had met the dulcimer player I had been looking for in Asheboro. His name, it turned out, was Virgil Craven. We were already too far westward to retrace our steps to the east, and, to my regret, I never heard Virgil Craven.

We stayed overnight at Richard Blaustein's house in eastern Tennessee. The next day we drove towards "McMinnville or Tullahoma." Once in McMinnville, a sizeable county seat, we stopped at the first phone booth we saw. I was going to call all the Cantrells until I found out who "Peanut" was and where he lived. Jon beat me to it. He asked the man getting out of the phone booth if he knew Peanut Cantrell. To my (and Jon's) amazement, he answered yes, he did. Not only that, he gave us directions to Peanut's house.

In retrospect this was a very unlikely occurrence. Both McMinnville and Tullahoma are fairly large places, or at least places where one would be unlikely

to ask a stranger on the street where a certain person lived, especially with such a vague address. Since the person was known as "Peanut" rather than by his initials J. R., it would have been impossible to locate him in a telephone directory. He wasn't particularly well-known locally, although he had appeared with his dulcimer in public on occasion.

I think we waited until the next day to pay him a call. He was a sprightly man of 75, with a strong rural Tennessee accent. His dulcimer was one that he had made, a rectangular instrument modeled on one that his father had made early in the century. When I asked how it was tuned, he went to a bookshelf and pulled down an old shape-note hymnal which included the rudiments of music. With some difficulty (because, for example, the central bridge managed to divide one course into sixths, though I was baffled how it was done), I wrote down the tuning.

He said that his father had played the dulcimer, as well as his father's father. All Cantrells, going back to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1609, had played the instrument. Well, I tend to be skeptical of such claims, but his father certainly had played a dulcimer, and it was reasonable to assume that his grandfather was a player as well. The soundboard on the dulcimer was poplar which, curiously, Asel Gardner also used. He placed the dulcimer on his lap or on the table while in play. He played tunes like "Soldier's Joy," "Susie, Won't You Come," "Sail Away Ladies," and a tune that he wrote called "Needle in the Haystack" (a title, incidentally, that Michigan dulcimer player, Chet Parker, gave to a tune that he wrote!). Peanut posed for a picture with his dulcimer, and we left.

Our plan was to use the remainder of the week traveling through Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, before going to a country music festival in southeastern Nebraska on Saturday. The only dulcimer encounter we had was at a private museum, the Miles Mountain Musical Museum, in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. We only learned of it as we passed through, seeing the sign. The museum disbanded in the 1990s and its holdings were auctioned off, but at the time it was a going tourist attraction, filled with musical automatons.

Its dulcimer collection (numbering five) was not without interest. The oldest was a well-made cherry instrument with turned legs and a rectangular case. It probably dated from about 1840-1850. Another was a MacKenzie piano-harp with a patent date of 1890. The third was a dulcimer manufactured in Missouri about 1860, of the same variety as the one played by Aunt Nellie McKinney at Knott's Berry Farm in California in the 1950s and by Ruth Tyler, of Joplin, Missouri, at the same time. The fourth was a hackett dulcimer made in Liberty Center, Ohio, with the later addition of simple, turned legs. Finally, there was a unique, crudely-made rectangular dulcimer with one string per course throughout.

Nobody at the museum had heard of one of these instruments being played. I learned subsequently that there was a player in this region at that time, but unfortunately I had no clues then. Three years later, I met Sterl Van Arsdale's brother Phillip, who lived in Clarksville, Arkansas for many years. He had heard there was a dulcimer "factory" at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, at one time. I wrote a general letter to the local newspaper there and got a response from a woman who told me about her uncle who had played one. He was dead then, but was alive in 1972. What sort of tradition or activity existed in the Arkansas-Missouri-Oklahoma border area remains to be discovered.

We spent the next week in Missouri and then returned to Michigan via Kentucky, Illinois, and Indiana. Jon won the "farthest fiddler to come" award at a contest in Eureka, Missouri. They didn't allow accompanists, and I recall that the judges didn't allow his proposed waltz, "Mockin'bird Hill," on the grounds that it was too new (written in 1950). Nevertheless, we had a good time there.

After six weeks on the road, we were broke and glad to be home; but the memories and things I learned were to last for a long time. A similar trip just couldn't be made today.

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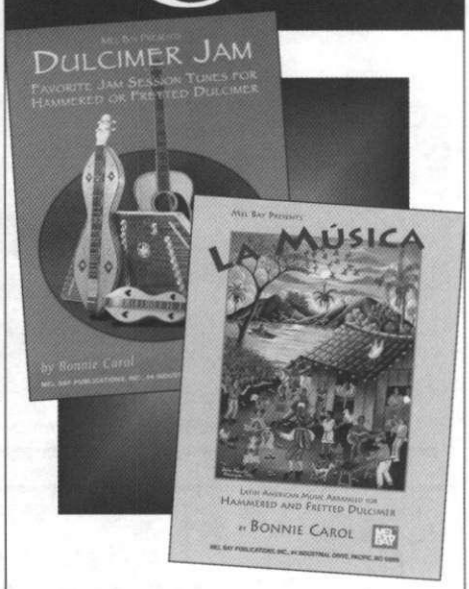

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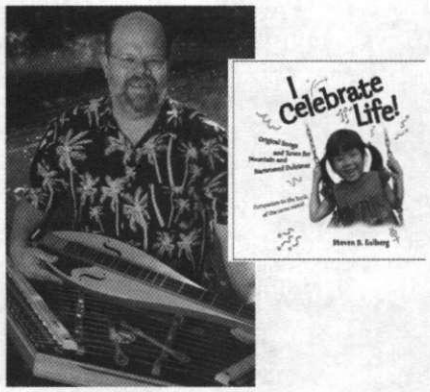

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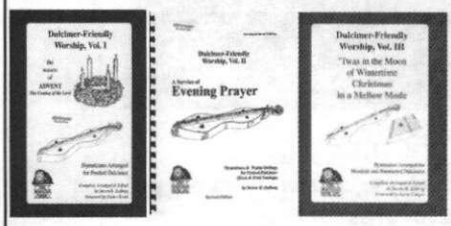

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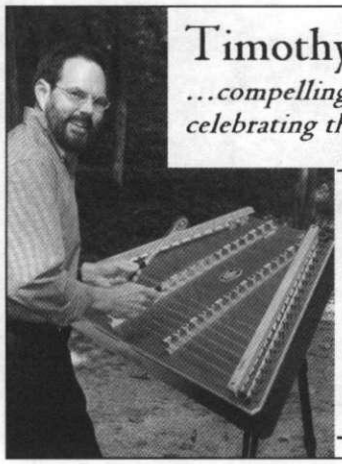

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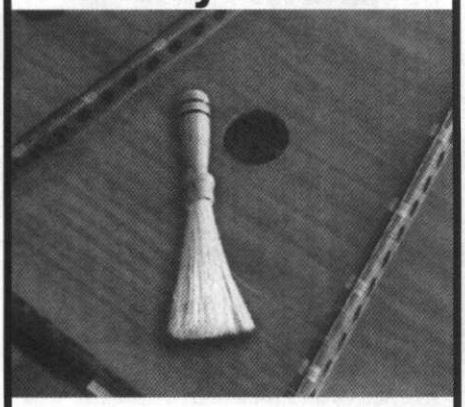

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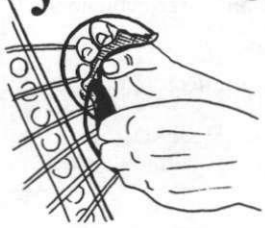

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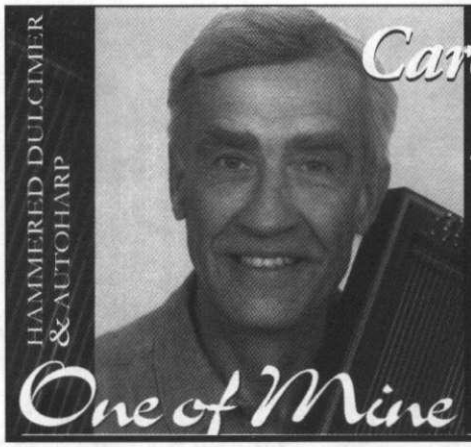

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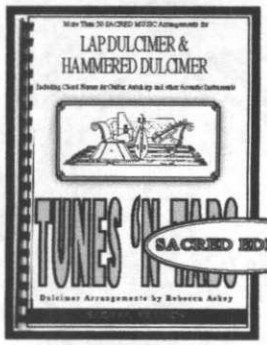

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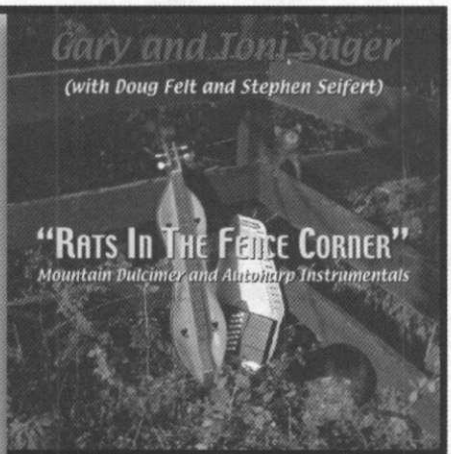

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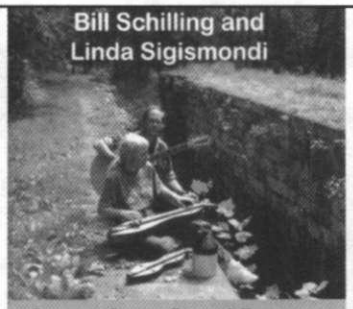

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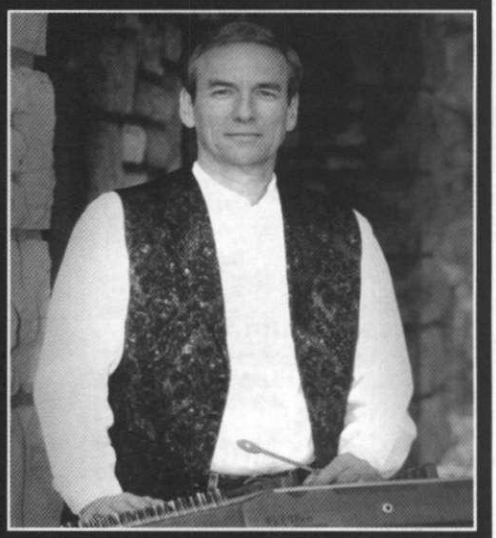

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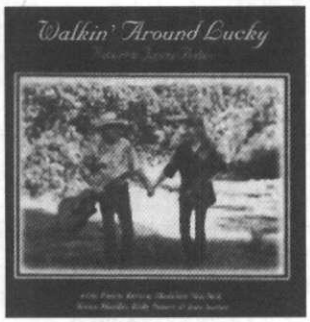

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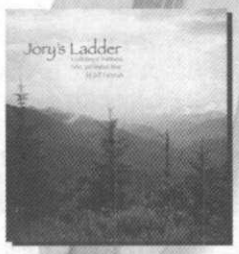

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The Silver Chord

Scott Reiss, 54, recorder player, hammered dulcimer player, and percussionist, died on Dec 14, 2005 at his home in Arlington Virginia. He was born in Coopersburg, Pennsylvania, and was an all-state clarinetist in high school until he picked up the recorder. He would become one of the finest players in the United States.

At Antioch College in Ohio, he met the other two musicians who with him would form the Folger Consort. After graduating from Antioch, Scott studied at the New England Conservatory of Music and the University of Maryland. With his wife, violist Tina Chancey, he formed the group Hesperus. Old-timey musician Bruce Hutton became another member. In 1984 Scott took up hammered dulcimer, and its sound became a prominent feature of the band.

He performed as a member of the Folger Consort from 1977 to 1998, and afterwards often as a guest. With Hesperus, he toured from Brunei to Indonesia to Singapore in a concert program sponsored by the U.S. Information Agency. He also performed in Germany, Bolivia, Panama and, in 2005, China. In the US, he appeared at the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center in New York, and in Los Angeles. In 1983, he started a workshop with Mike Seeger called Sound Catcher, training musicians to play music by ear, rather than from written scores, and it continues today.

Scott was a natural musician. He thought about music; his writings were published in *Continuo, American Recorder* and *Early Music America.* And he could put in the work; he told me once he'd just sat down and learned to read in all the clefs. But he swam in music like a fish in water; there never seemed anything forced.

It never occurred to Scott that he couldn't play anything he liked: blues, Irish reels or hoedowns on recorder; Medieval Italian rotas on hammered dulcimer. Scott at a jam was like a kid at a circus, delighted to be in a world of wonderful things. He could start a 14th-century virelai by Machaut and wander happily into bebop, or begin a 13th-century Italian song and step into a Kentucky fiddle tune. It's not surprising that he and Hesperus became famous for their ability to cross boundaries.

Once he came to a party at Joanie's and my home. He and Tina had just returned from the Andes and he'd brought some wooden whistles, a sort of folk recorder played on the streets of Bolivia. They were supposed to be played with drums, at full-blast, and so a bass drum was brought out, and a couple of us and Scott fired up the whistles outside on the deck. The deck cleared, people rolled their eyes, and the dog vanished for the rest of the day; but that's where the music went, Scott following it; and we followed Scott. In my memory, Scott will always be arriving at the door with some amazing new thing.

It's a commonplace that gifts come at a price, but many of us knew Scott had to pay for his. The bipolar disorder that plagued him all of his life became harder and harder for him to control and to bear. His friends were shocked but perhaps not surprised when he ended his own life.

Tina Chancy will continue Hesperus, and Sound Catcher will be held again August 13–19, 2006 in Staunton, Virginia. Email TinaChancy@cs.com for information. Tina has donated Scott's hammered dulcimer to the Upper Potomac Dulcimer Fest, where he played it often, and played it well.

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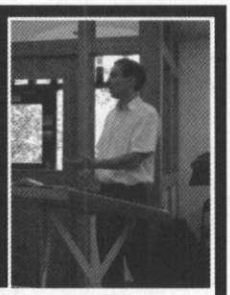

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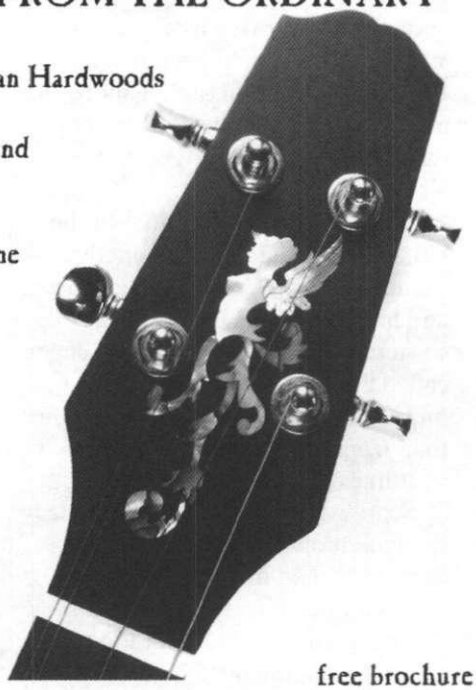

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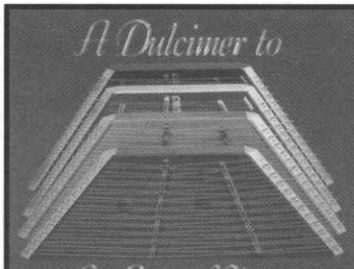

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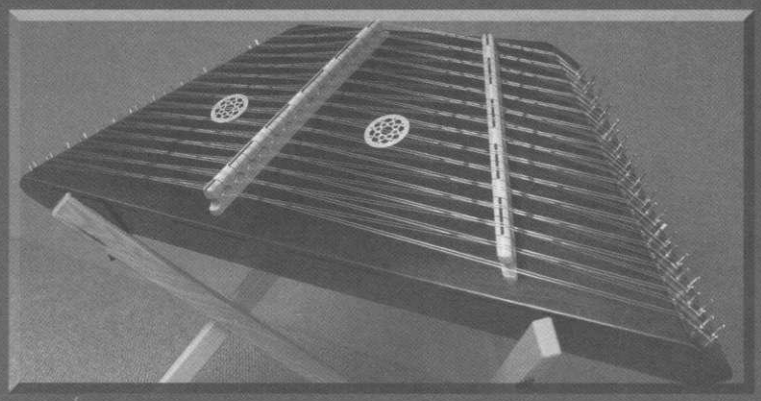

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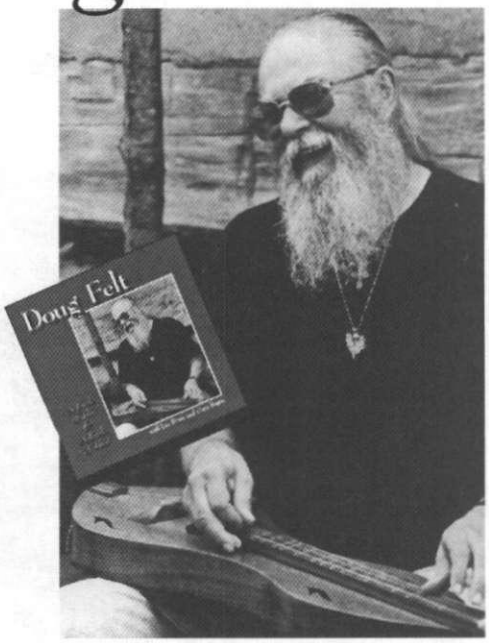

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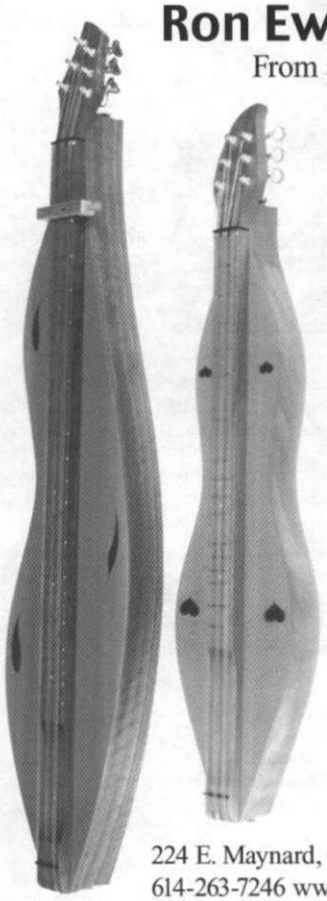

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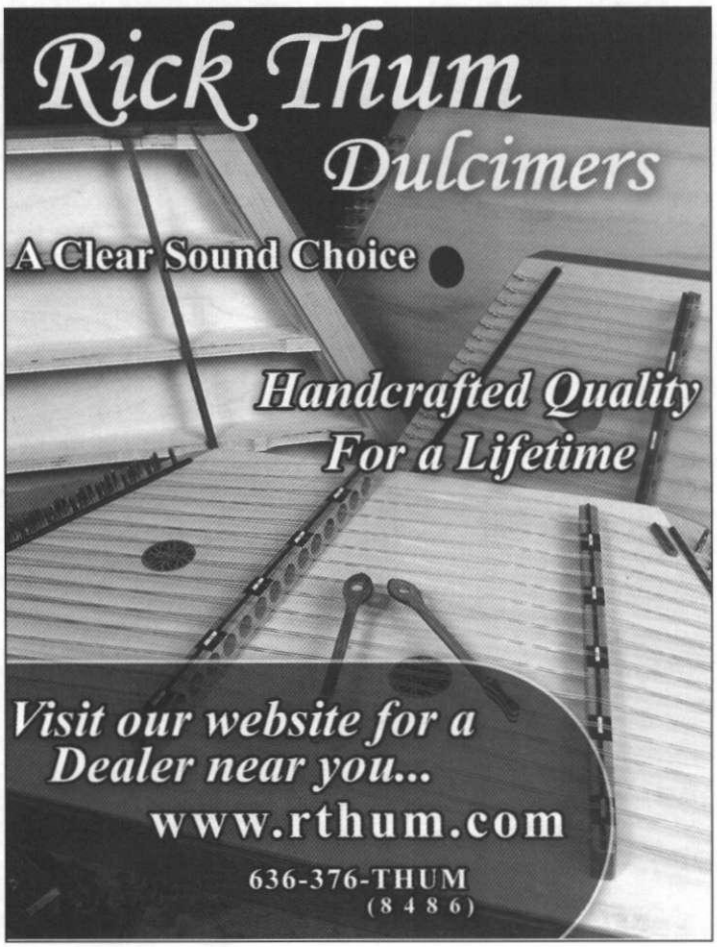

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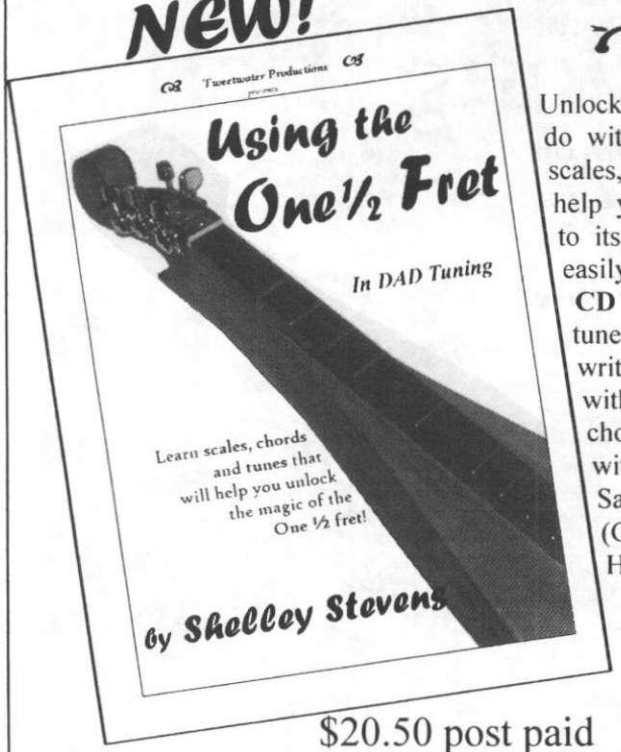

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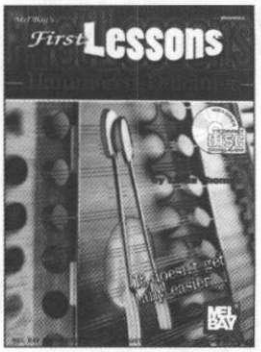

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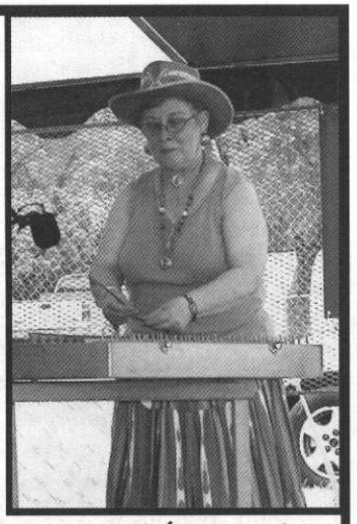

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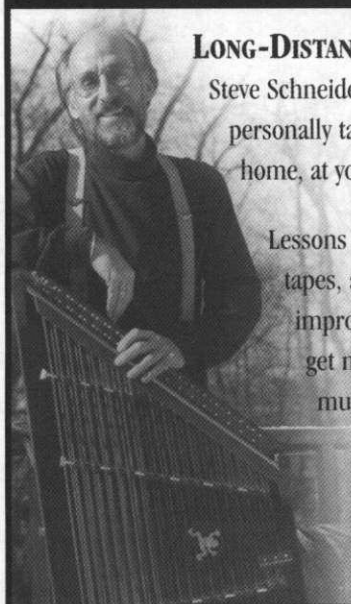

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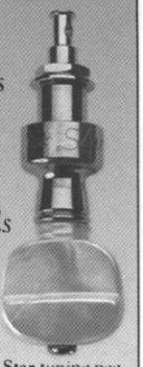

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The Trail • *Black Bear Crossing, Lucy Henry, 1170 Ridge Road, Montgomery, PA 17752, 570-547-6922, bluhen@micro-link.net, blackbearcrossing.com (CD).*

The members of Black Bear Crossing are scattered throughout the rural areas of Lycoming and Snyder counties in north central Pennsylvania. Since the group members must travel back roads in order to hold a practice session, they selected a name which reflects a common thread − the occasional sighting of a black bear en route to the rehearsal site! Lucy Henry plays flute, recorders, pennywhistle, and hammered dulcimer; Wendy McCormick plays hammered dulcimer, accordion and folk harp; Phylleri Ball plays keyboards, mountain dulcimer and bodhran; and Warren Fisher is on bass. Melissa Becker from Austin, Texas, guests on fiddle. Tunes include The Titan, Metsukukkia, The Arran Boat and Drops of Brandy.

Vacant Chair • *Wayfarers & Company, RD 1, Box 1314, Stroudsburg, PA 18360, 570-420-1896, wayfarersandco.com (CD).*

Wayfarers and Company is Norm Williams, Bob Mallalieu, Amanda Parker, Carol Lehrman, and John James. The group performs gospel music and old-time songs on guitars, hammered and lap dulcimers, fiddle, flute, mandolin, harp and banjo, as well as a cappella arrangements of traditional music. This is an impressive debut, featuring plenty of spirited picking and singing. John James is also a talented artist, and his work on the album design deserves special mention. Selections include We'll Work 'Till Jesus Comes, Where Could I Go?, Rosin the Beau, Hard Times and Down to the River.

String Fling • *Beltaine, John Keys, 7019 Brooklyn Street, Portland, OR 97206, 503-788-5648, jkeys@beltainemusic.com, beltainemusic .com (CD).*

Beltaine is an instrumental trio from the Pacific Northwest featuring Brian Baker on guitar, mandolin and shaker; Kris Chase on hammered and mountain dulcimer and bass box; and John Keys on hammered dulcimer and flute. The word "beltaine" means "bright" and refers to a bonfire lit by the presiding Druid at the Celtic fire festival known as "Beltane" to celebrate the return of life and light to the world, i.e. summer. Their music is Celtic-flavored, but includes tunes from many countries. Selections include Wedding March from Unst, Shenandoah Falls, Red Haired Boy, Hewlett and Swallow's Tail Jig.

Tapestry of My Heart • *Dee Dee Tibbits, 2784 West Dixon Road, Caro, Michigan 48723, 989-673-3929, rtibbits@centurytel .net, musictapestry.com (CD).*

Dee Dee plays hammered and mountain dulcimers, marimbula, whistles, harpleik zither, harp, ukelin, hurdy gurdy, recorders, cello, Indian mouthbow, and bouzouki on her debut release and is joined by Terry Bell on guitar and piano. Her playing is excellent—particularly on hammered dulcimer, harp and whistles—and the arrangements are imaginative. This is an impressive debut. Selections include Bryson Hall Waltz, Whispering Cattails, If I Were a Featherbed and Psalm 139.

Rats in the Fence Corner • *Gary and Toni Sager, Prussia Valley Dulcimers, 145328 US Rt. 23, Waverly, OH 45690, 740-941-1271, pvdulcimers@bright.net (CD).*

Gary and Toni run Prussia Valley Dulcimers in Waverly, Ohio and are fixtures at festivals throughout the Midwest. Gary built all of the dulcimers he plays on the album, and Toni plays autoharp. Gary always seems to have a unique take on tunes that you wouldn't expect to hear on the mountain dulcimer, and his superb playing is the album's focus. Tunes include Cuckoo's Nest, Miss the Mississippi and You, Julie Ann Johnson and Blackhawk Waltz.

Jiggle the Handle • *Samantha Oberkfell, Rockit Dawg Productions, 1188 Moorlands Drive, St. Louis, MO 63117, Samantha@rockitdawg .com, rockitdawg.com (CD).*

Samantha's second album again features her outstanding hammered dulcimer and fiddle playing. She is accompanied by Carole Bryan (hammered dulcimer and banjo), Wes Chappell (bouzouki and guitar), Lloyd Wright (mountain dulcimer, guitar, mandolin and banjo), Ken Kolodner (fiddle), and Mike Tiefenbrun (bass). Sam has been playing music since she was eight years old, and her skills on both hammered dulcimer and fiddle are extraordinary. Tunes include Jiggle the Handle/Potato Hill, Old Joe's, Two Rivers and Liza Lynn.

Seeing Things • *Heidi Muller and Bob Webb, Cascadia Music, PO Box 1064, Charleston, WV 25324, heidimuller.com (CD).*

Heidi Muller is an award-winning songwriter, guitarist and mountain dulcimer player. On her newest release, she teams with West Virginian Bob Webb, a fine dulcimer player in his own right. In addition to dulcimer, both play guitar and Bob chips in with mandolin and a very tasty electric cello. A host of solid musicians help out on fiddle, fretless bass, piano, slide guitar and backing vocals. Selections include Seeing Things, Snowdance, Elk River Blues/West Virginia Hills and Highway Is Calling.

Under the Dogwoods • *Steven K. Smith, 429 Park Avenue, Newark, OH 43065, 740-349-8192, sksmith@sksmithmusic.com, sksmithmusic.com (CD).*

Steven's latest offering is all instrumental, featuring his terrific mountain dulcimer playing (standard, baritone, dulcimette, acoustic-electric) with guitar and synthesizer in the mix as well. The music comes from a number of sources-England, Ireland and the continent—but also includes several of Steven's original compositions. Jerry Rockwell helps out on several tracks. Tunes include Under the Dogwoods, Blind Mary, Spring in Russia and Pavanne d'Angleterre.

The Preacher's Daughters • *Rachel Sprinkle and Deborah Justice, PO Box 205, Sharon, SC 29742, 803-627-0698, pennywhistler10@aol.com, or 1006 N. Monroe Street, Bloomington, IN 47404, 812-323-7869, thepreachersdaughters.com (CD).*

Rachel and Deborah are both daughters of Presbyterian ministers who met at the Swannanoa Gathering and found out that they have a lot more than that in common. They both love old time music and the hammered dulcimer. Rachel also plays bowed dulcimer and pennywhistle on their newest album, which features acoustic music from a variety of traditions including Canada, the Balkans, the Middle East and most areas of Europe, as well as the traditional fiddle music of the American south. They get stellar support from Ken Kolodner, Wes Chappell, and Paul Oorts on fiddle, bouzouki and guitar. Tunes include Bonaparte Crossing the Rhine/Cumberland Gap, Josefin's Dopvals, Mount Royale/Le Crepuscule and Dutch Student March.

Songs of the Cowboy for Mountain Dulcimer • *Vicki Stuckert, 1600 Eastview Drive, Findlay, OH 45840, 419-424-4096, mt_dulcigal@yahoo.com (Book, CD).*

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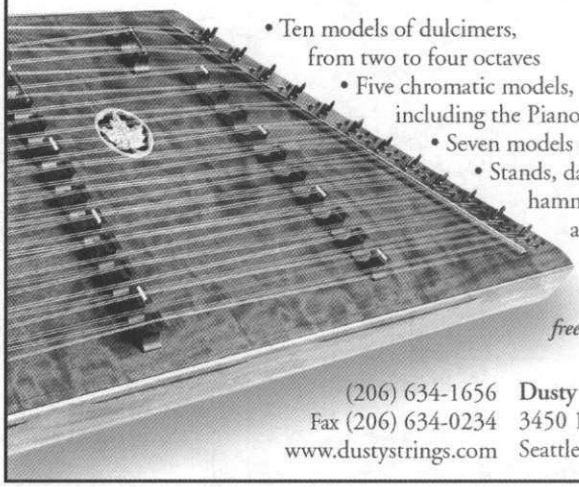

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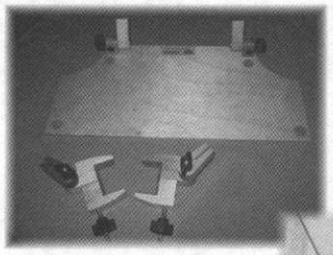

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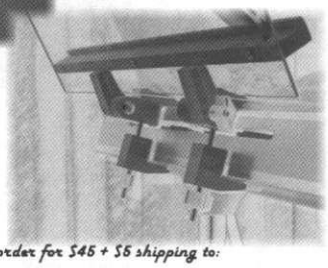

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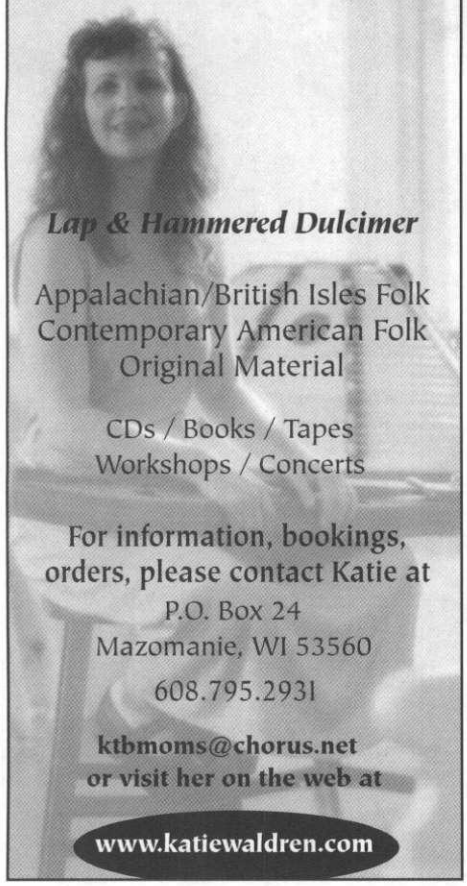

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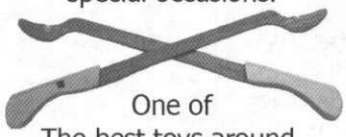

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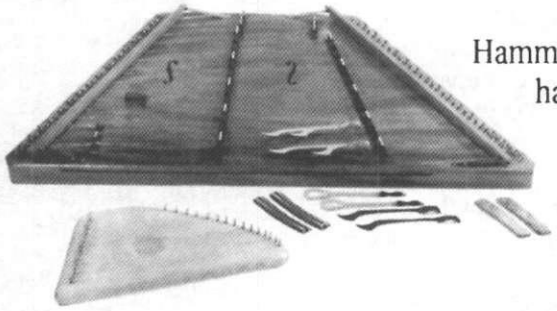

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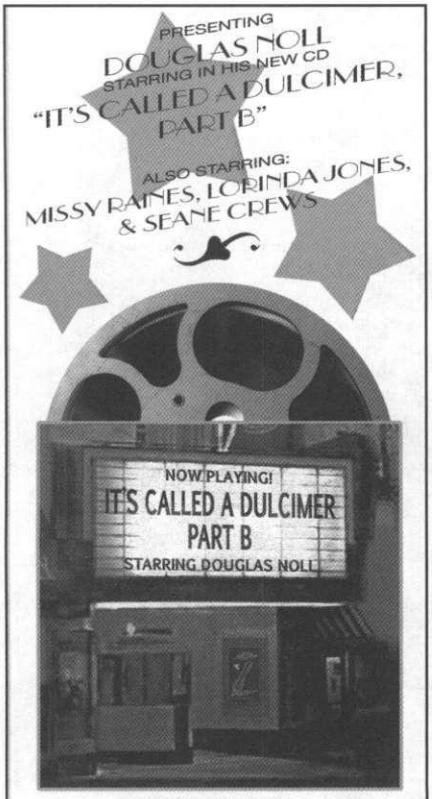

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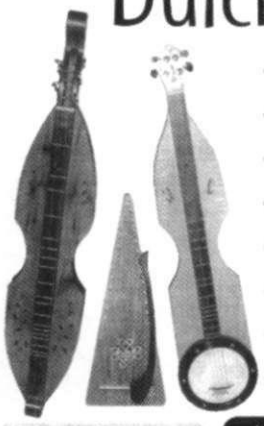

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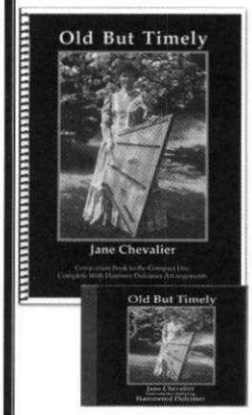

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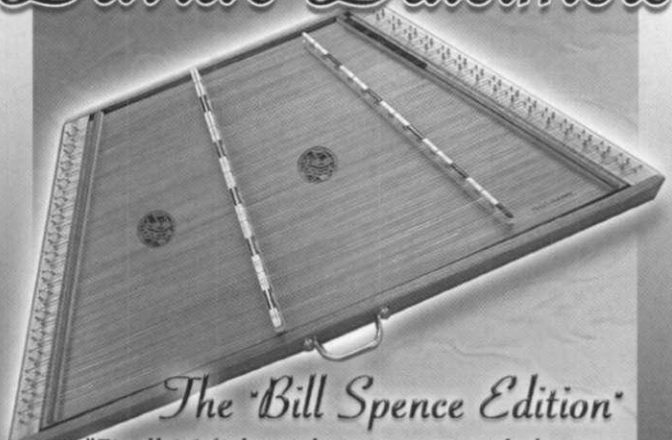

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